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# MITLA.

A

NARRATIVE OF INCIDENTS AND PERSONAL ADVENTURES

ON A JOURNEY IN

MEXICO, GUATEMALA, AND SALVADOR

IN THE YEARS 1853 TO 1855.

WITH

OBSERVATIONS ON THE MODES OF LIFE IN THOSE COUNTRIES.

BY G. F. VON TEMPSKY.

EDITED BY J. S. BELL,

AUTHOR OF

"JOURNAL OF A RESIDENCE IN CIRCASSIA IN THE YEARS 1836 TO 1839."

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TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

# THE EARL OF WESTMORELAND, G.C.B., G.C.H.

ETC. ETC. ETC.

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My Lord,

In the year 1848, your Lordship had the kindness to send to the late Mr. Patrick Walker, Her Britannic Majesty's Consul-General for the Mosquito Kingdom, a letter of introduction in my behalf.

This was my only and most efficient introduction to the subsequent course of my life in America.

Your Lordship has now greatly added to that obligation by the kindness with which, in your Lordship's letter of the 24th of September last, addressed to me in Liegnitz, you acceded to my request to be allowed to show my sense of the former benefit conferred on me, by dedicating to your Lordship—as I hereby have the honour to do—this publication of MITLA, the fruit of travel and residence in a large portion of Spanish North America.

I have the honour to be,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's much obliged

and most obedient servant,

GUSTAVUS FERDINAND von TEMPSKY.

Dunoon, Argyllshire:

*October* 18, 1857.

# PREFACE.

After various journeys in Spanish America, and frequent intercourse with the races that inhabit it, I came to the conclusion that, however much there has been written about them, they have never been portrayed in a life-like manner.

I have tried to do this: I have studied to draw the Spanish American, with the scenery of his country, free of prejudice either in favour or against them; neither leaning to romantic illumination, nor to cold dissection of their characteristics.

I believe I am also expected to make an apology for presuming to bring forward these ideas in the English language, instead of my own.

But what apology would atone for the presumption, were this use of the English language to be proved against me as an abuse of it?

If it is, then, that an apology can be found only in the book itself, and in the charitable hearts of the public, let me appeal to the latter, to whom I trust even more than to the former, that their judgment may be a lenient one.

THE AUTHOR.

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## CHAPTER I.

### FROM SAN FRANCISCO TO MAZATLAN.

Embarkation at and Departure from San Francisco.—Voyage to Mazatlan.—Our Fellow-Passengers.—Expiry of one of them.—Birth of another.—Joaquin, the Highwayman.—His sanguinary Vengeance.—Arrival at Mazatlan.

After three years of "Life in California," partly in the mountain and the mining districts, and partly at San Francisco, I managed to get afloat again; leaving, with heartfelt pleasure, the "Wonder of the West," and all its mad worshippers of Mammon. I embarked, with a Dr. S——, on the 1st of July, 1853, on board the French brig "Independance," bound for Mazatlan, on the western coast of Mexico.

On the "glorious 4th" we weighed anchor. Music on shore, music in the harbour, filled the air with harmonious strains of Yankee-doodle, accompanied by a due portion of patriotic shouts,

blazing firecrackers, and other enthusiastic bursts of transatlantic feeling. We passed the entrance of the harbour called the "Golden Gate;" we looked again on its bright alluring outside, but with feelings how changed! Now buoyed up by an emotion of relief at spurning a threshold to enter which the heart had once leapt with joy and eagerness, but for which Dante's immortal inscription now seemed the fittest, "Voi ch' entrate," &c. While, however, we spurned the hated entrance, we could not but heave a sigh of sympathy for those thousands who, less fortunate than we, slumbered now, with their blasted hopes, in that soil which they had explored for happiness.

For the first few days we were revelling so much in the new pleasure of again rocking on the old Pacific and breathing its uncontaminated air, that we had scarcely bestowed a look on either our vessel or our fellow-passengers. Our attention to the former was drawn by the wind, which, unintentionally, no doubt, blew our fore-top-gallant sail into the sea. We then observed that the disproportioned effect of so slight an impulse was occasioned, not through lack of mending in our sails, but through the oversight of leaving any of the original canvass. The arrangement of our run-

ning gear would, in its picturesque confusion, have been more highly appreciated by an artist than by sailors; judging, at least, from what the crew said on the subject whenever they attempted to unravel the mystery.

The responsibility of the command of our vessel rested, more or less, on no less than four captains, all belonging to "la grande nation:" first, in size, power of voice, and volubility of speech, ranked the original captain, owner of the vessel, and amateur in the culinary department; next to him in importance came a captain, formerly a renowned terror of all French insurance companies, who had now shipped as mate; thirdly, we boasted of a captain who worked his passage; and, fourthly, we had one who boasted that he had paid for it, which act of generosity seemed to entitle him to be the most troublesome of all the four.

The advantage we should have derived from so much combined experience, was somewhat impaired by their means of communication, being only a very doubtful Spanish, for a crew consisting of two Englishmen, one Yankee, one Italian, one Spaniard, one Malay, and a cook from Gascony.

Our cabin passengers, excepting a young English lawyer, consisted mostly of Mexican gamblers, re-

turning, either with their spoils, or, spoiled, retreating before American competition.

The rallying point of this clique was represented by a stylish Mexican lady. An envious countrywoman of hers, from the region of between-decks, informed me, with a malicious twinkle of her eye, that the said lady had gone very poor to California; that, shortly after her arrival, she had lived in pleasure and abundance, that she never worked, and that now she returned to her home with riches! I cite this as a rare instance of any of her sort having been able to keep long their ill-gotten gains. The between-decks swarmed with those who had lost theirs. All Mexicans, they returned to live on their parents, or at least to beg their blessings ere they died, and to repose in sacred precincts, and the soil of their country.

One of them was not even thus fortunate; she expired on board. In the last moments I saw her sinking eye struggling, in the anguish of death, to fix itself on two tawdry pictures of saints, held before her by a kneeling Mexican, lately a robber in California; while another individual, of the same profession, supported her in his arms! A few more charitable persons stood around, and said the responses for the dying in tones touched by the

sadness of the scene. With these melancholy sounds were strangely mingling the sounds of laughter, the clattering of dice and glasses, issuing from another corner of the dimly lighted space, where scenes of Californian high-life were being enacted, now more wildly and loud, as if in defiance of the presence of death. Poor woman! as she had lived she died; dissipation shouted even in her funereal chorus, and stood grinning over her corpse.

In a few days the vacancy in the list of passengers was filled up by an infant new-comer. The spectacle of his advent was enjoyed, throughout its progress, by the whole spectators of the between-decks, who greeted their new shipmate with cheers, and storms of laughter!

So much for the community of the between-decks; the best behaved individuals of which were some half dozen Mexicans, who had, for the last two years, served under the colours of "Joaquin," the most famous robber of California. From one of them, whose esteem I gained through my knowledge of his language, I learned many new facts about Joaquin, which corroborated what I had heard already in California of his character.

It appears that Joaquin was of a good family in Hermosillo (a town in Sonora), and had brought

to California an unblemished character, along with a little capital. The latter he invested in the erection of a store at the mines, and in furnishing it with all the necessaries of a mining community. Very soon the "smart" people of that region found out that the new comer was as yet "green;" consequently every body got goods and provisions of him on credit. In a short time Joaquin was ruined. He took pick and shovel in hand and went to work at digging gold. Luck favoured him, and he fell in with a very rich "placer." His former friends and debtors heard of his success, came to convince themselves of it, and, in a body, expelled him from the placer, under the plea of his being only a Mexican and they Americans. Even that he bore as yet patiently, and migrated to another part of the mines. Once more fortune smiled on him; but again some of the "masters of California" dispossessed him, not only of his claims, but also took from him the gold he had gathered. Here one chapter of his life ended.

Up to this time he had been an honest, a good man. On resuming active life, he had spurned honesty and goodness, and, in their place, sat vengeance implacable to the race that had trampled on him. Few men of his station have been as

successful in the execution of a vow of so extensive an import. For more than two years he murdered and robbed every American he could get hold of. He acted either in company or alone, but always with fearful success. The peculiar state of society in California, and the nature of the country, aided his personal qualities of undaunted courage, strength, and excellent horsemanship, in indulging unchecked the sanguinary gratification of his retribution. Every pursuit of him proved fruitless; twenty-five thousand dollars placed on his head had no better effect. The native Californians, hating the intruding Americans, assisted him with asylums, with horses, with men. His countrymen, then numerous in California, adored him, and many of them have, with the sacrifice of their lives, covered his flight or made good the defence of his place of refuge. After innumerable escapes, in the beginning of 1853, he left California, by land, for Sonora. Sated with blood and laden with spoil, he intended to set up again, in his native character, as an honest man. This was the last my narrator knew of him, assuring me that all accounts in the newspapers, about his capture and death, were false.

On the 22nd of July we saw land, and the bold

outlines of the mountains round Mazatlan soon became visible. On the evening, the rattling of the cable chain torn along by the dropping anchor, announced our deliverance from the floating "Pandemonium" of which I have attempted to give some slight idea.

## CHAP. II.

### FROM MAZATLAN TO DURANGO.

Mexican Hotels. — Their Furniture and Inscriptions. — A Mexican travelling Party. — Their Means of Defence. — We decline their Protection. — Commencement of our Journey. — San Sebastian. — A superannuated Town. — Our Start from it on Foot. — Delights of Pedestrianism. — A queer Predicament. — Traveller's-Fare. — Irish Hospitality and Heart. — Change of Temperature. — Contrasts in Vegetation. — Competitors in Business. — A choice Volunteer. — A bottomless Abyss. — Ascending the Sierra Madre. — Mingled Beauty and Grandeur. — Sugar-Loaves and Rattle-snakes. — A Thunder-storm. — First Vestiges of Comanches. — Precautions against them. — A Night-Alarm — A ragged Garrison. — Entering on "Debateable Land." — A fearful Discovery. — Fate of the travelling Party. — Indian Foot-tracks. — A happy Deliverance.

MAZATLAN is a pretty little town, built partly on the foot of a steep promontory, partly on a sandy bank which encircles an extensive lagoon. The harbour is sheltered towards the sea by some conical islands of barren rock. It is only some fifteen years ago that the increasing trade with the interior — the provinces of Sinaloa and Durango — made of a cluster of thatched huts a well-built little town. During the height of the Californian gold fever, Mazatlan made still more rapid advances, through the increase of trade in provisions

with San Francisco and the number of passengers, Mexican and American, arriving and departing. This activity had subsided when we arrived, chiefly through the communication with the interior having nearly become broken off, by the approximation of parties of Comanche Indians, who, for some years, had entered the Northern Mexican territory, finding it a safer theatre for their depredatory inclinations than the Western States of North America. The stories afloat of the ravages committed by these Indians were so horrible, that we were at first disinclined to believe in them; but the unanimous testimony of everybody, and the statements of some veracious persons, convinced us at least of the height of danger on the road to the interior.

We took up our abode in a *meson* (Mexican hotel). These *mesons* are generally spacious quadrangular buildings, with courtyards in the centre, round which run corridors. The rooms communicate only with the corridor. The latter is used besides as a kind of hall, where everybody slings his hammock, and hangs up his riding gear. The rooms allotted to the traveller are furnished in very primitive style, consisting of one so-called bedstead per room. The claim this article of furniture has to the name of bedstead mainly con-

sists in its having four legs, supporting either a few planks, nailed together, or a frame of wood, which is interlaced with thongs of cowhide. Height and shape vary according to the fancy of the artist, so that you are either nearly on a disagreeable level with the dusty brick floor and its insect population, or at an elevation the ascent and descent of which are difficult and hazardous. On the wall of these rooms, near the ceiling, a loop-hole takes the place of a window, where air and light struggle through iron bars for admittance. On the whole, these rooms are pleasant enough after a fatiguing ride from their coolness. Their walls generally present a variety of subjects for meditation. Foreign and native artists immortalise their transitory stay by a few vigorous sketches on them with charcoal, knife, broomstick, or any other handy implement. You see the valiant soldier, with gun and bayonet, grimly looking down upon you. You recognise the impassioned hand of some amorous traveller, who, to lighten the burden of his heart, has transferred the image of the beloved one to a tablet of more stable material than it. Here an enterprising Yankee, waiting for a passage, has sketched impatiently a clipper in full sail, with stars and stripes, and General Jackson for a godfather. Poetry, refer-

ring either to fickle love or badly-cooked dinners, is intermingled among dates, names, saints, crosses, and jackasses, which some faithful muleteer has engraved from nature.

My friend Dr. S—— told me, the second day after our arrival, of a numerous party of Mexicans going very soon to the interior, intimating that such would be a good opportunity for our going there also. I told him not to be too hasty in making any arrangement, as the subject required a good deal of mature reflection. Besides, I knew from former experience (having travelled in 1850 from Acapulco to Mazatlan by land), that so soon as the party mentioned should hear of our going the same road, they would come to us, and offer their company. It is not always purely from civility — so innate to the descendants of the Spanish race — that such offers are made. The people reckon every white and decent-looking person to be possessed of courage and skill, and think his company therefore a great acquisition on any dangerous road.

As I prophesied, so it happened. The following day, a Mexican gentleman, in European dress, came to see us, heading a crowd of his countrymen, arrayed in their national costume, which is

worn by nearly all classes on a journey. In about half an hour, we luckily finished the shaking of hands and protestations of friendship with the last man in the crowd; and cigars being lit, and everybody having taken his post, we patiently awaited the speaker coming to the point. He commenced with a highly-coloured description of the danger on the road, illustrating it minutely with an enumeration of all the crimes which the Indians had already committed, in the shape of burning houses, murdering and scalping men, and carrying off women, children, and luggage. He referred then to their means of defence, which amounted to thirty well-armed men, the courage of whom, he hinted modestly, was beyond question. He invited us to come and see their arms and horses at their *meson*. We went, and saw actually some very fine animals, well made, of middle size, and great spirit. Each man had a carbine, thirty ball cartridges in a belt round his waist, a brace of pistols, and a sword; many of them had lances, which, in general, they knew pretty well how to handle. In fact, the preparations for any emergency were very good, and I should have liked nothing better than to join this party had the men been Europeans or Yankees, or their antagonists any other than

Comanche Indians. So, when at last the head man (a *licenciado*, or lawyer, by profession) most graciously offered us their protection, I said I would think about it, and let him know next day, thanking him, at the same time, for his generous offer.

My friend was very much astonished at my not accepting this proposal immediately; but, in coming home, I explained to him the reasons thus: — 1st, that a large party seldom escapes the notice of the Indians, who are generally on the look-out on the hills in the neighbourhood of the road, whereas a small party may pass unperceived; 2nd, that in case of a fight, I had little faith in the courage of these men,—and nothing emboldens Indians more than the least wavering; 3rd (and this was the strongest point of my argument), that, if we should let that party go ahead, they would be either victorious or defeated, and, in either case, the Indians would retire for a time from the theatre of action, so that if we should start two or three days later, we should most likely find the road clear.

My friend agreed, and next day we sent word that we could not think of starting yet. We saw their departure on that day: the sight was highly

picturesque. Nowhere is the Mexican seen to such advantage as on horseback, dressed and accoutred for a long journey. All was animation; men and horses showed their mettle, and, under the clattering of sabres and spurs, shouting and laughter, they dashed in a wild group down the long street. How will they look at the end of their journey? thought I, as I returned home with my friend, who half repented not having gone with them.

Next day we commenced the preparations for our journey. We found it so difficult to hire horses for Durango on account of the risk on the road, and the price and quality of those for sale so disproportioned, that we were advised, and concluded to take a boat on the lagoon as far as Urias, where we might hire horses as far as San Sebastian, and in the latter place, it was said, horses might be purchased more advantageously.

In Urias, a little village to the south of Mazatlan, we found, after some days of waiting, an *ariero* (muleteer), who engaged to carry us with our baggage to San Sebastian, which is twenty leagues from Mazatlan. We passed through Mazatlan *viejo* (old), after a short stay. It seemed to have been a place of importance formerly; some agriculture is its only resource at present. The

country we had passed till then was undulating and fertile, but not very romantic; an opening in the wood that shaded our road, and a sudden turn in the latter, brought us within view of San Sebastian. This little town is perched upon a detached eminence, of bold and precipitous ascent, situated in a narrow valley, through which a broad river glides, encircling the peninsula on which the town is situated. A venerable church tower raises its head over all the other buildings that everywhere peep through luxuriant foliage. Towards the background, lowering clouds lay crouched upon some solitary and craggy heights, the outposts of majestic mountains, whose outlines were faintly visible.

By means of a letter of recommendation, we hired a house where we intended to hold a council of war in regard to our further movements. The rainy season had commenced, and made us feel inclined to take "winter quarters" here, and proceed forward in the fine season. Besides, as regarded horses, those offered for sale were, as in Mazatlan, either unserviceable or too high in price.

For some days we wandered about the place and its immediate vicinity in a state of indecision. Luckily the attractions of the town were not cal-

culated to prolong such indecision. During the dominion of Spain, this had been a place of importance and wealth; now a feeble existence was scarcely perceptible amid pictures of general decay. On the remains of better days, the present generation live listlessly, awaiting a still sadder future, feeling their want of energy to support the weight of ruin slowly sinking on them. A few fine houses near the *Plaza* (square) still present, in their solid architecture, a pleasant contrast to the crumbling roofs and split walls of the surrounding habitations. But their corridors, supported by stone pillars and arches, were deserted; no life was in their courtyards nor round their fountains. In vain we looked for bright eyes behind the iron window bars, or the fluttering of white robes in their garden walks; their substitutes, whenever they appeared, were lustreless and repugnant.

At last we grew tired of lonely streets and visiting a few superannuated families who seemed to have preserved of their noble ancestors only their stupid formalities. In spite of the rainy season, in spite of all the exhortations of all the Dons and Doñas, who crossed themselves at the idea of going on foot to Durango, we decided on leaving. We left in charge of our host all our baggage, and a

few lines, in which we took a respectful leave of our antediluvian acquaintances.

On the 12th of August we rose with daybreak, rolled up our *serapes**, stuck revolver and bowie-knife into our belts, and, shouldering our rifles, we escaped at a brisk pace from the vicinity of that dreary place — San Sebastian. Soon the clear atmosphere of the open country purged the mind of the dregs of lethargy which had hung heavily on our spirits; and we strode forward with a feeling of exultation bounding in our breasts, as the fresh and balmy morning wind shook the dew from foliage and flowers, and the dim light of daybreak gradually glowed into radiant sunshine.

The country through which we passed was well adapted for the enjoyment of walking. In fact, travelling on foot, for any one who is used to it a little, is the best mode of fully enjoying the beauties of a mountainous country. Here we were in the midst of them. We had reached the crest of a lofty hill, and beheld around us a boundless ocean of mountains; here heaving in scathed peaks and precipices; there verdant with undulating lines of foliage, or, naked and craggy, stretching from

* The serape is a blanket of coloured wool, serving as a cloak in Mexico: in other countries of Spanish America it is called "chamarro," "cobija," &c.

north to south, until the eye failed to follow their endless extension, dissolved in a purple atmosphere. Who can revel with more exultation in such a view than he who has obtained it by vigorous exertion? The agitation of the blood from movement, and the gratification one feels at having accomplished something difficult, predispose the mind to enjoy more keenly such pleasure. And the occasional rest under a green shade, when thirst makes nectar of the cool mountain rill, and the eye sweeps placidly along a horizon of beauty, who feels so sweetly such repose, who feels such ecstacy, as he who has undergone fatigue for them?

So we strolled onward, up hill, down dale, keeping our direction pretty well, from the information we got at San Sebastian. But, in fact, both of us were used to trusting to our own guidance; former travels in California and other countries having given us all the experience necessary for similar undertakings. At noon, a few pieces of bread and cheese, a few whiffs of "the weed," made up our dinner, which our appetite relished amazingly as we lay on the shady banks of a small river, in which we had bathed, previously to our repast.

In the afternoon of the same day, we started again. Clouds shrouded the sun, and it began to

rain in good earnest, as it rains in all tropical climates. We did not mind this much; only we took care to keep our arms dry, and trudged patiently onward. Our road then lay along a precipitously-sided valley, through which a rapid and pretty wide river winds its tortuous course.

We had to cross this river about fifty times, wading up to our armpits at times, which, rather refreshing at first, became too cool at last. My friend, in particular, committed the imprudence of taking off his boots, at the beginning; and, his feet getting sore and swollen from the stones in the river, he found it, all at once, impossible to get them on again. There he sat, perched upon a high stone, surrounded by the roaring waters, with one boot half on, the other held despondingly by his side, looking the picture of wretchedness and despair. His moans, during vain efforts to force on the refractory boot, and at the same time to keep his equilibrium, brought me at last to his rescue. Our united strength accomplished, at length, the difficult feat, after sundry tumbles into the river. It was now growing dark, the rain increasing, and the river rising fast, so that we hailed with unmitigated delight a gleam of fire-light through the dark foliage.

It was a light from our place of destination,

Chupaderos, twelve leagues from San Sebastian. Two or three houses formed the whole settlement, and in the best of these we got *posada*, a kind of hospitality you have everywhere to ask for as a favour, and pay for as a duty, where the house is situated on a much frequented route, as was the case here.

Some eggs, beans, and *tortillas** appeased our voracious appetites; we wrung our wet *serapes*, wrapped ourselves in them, enjoyed a last cigar, and went contentedly to sleep, in company with some hopeful pigs, in the front corridor of the house.

Before daybreak, we started. The country was pretty much the same as that of the day before; only the hills had a greater elevation, and the valleys were deeper and more rugged. Towards the afternoon, we arrived at the summit of a considerable eminence, whence we descried, at the bottom of a narrow ravine, the village of Panuco. Here ended our second day's journey from San Sebastian, consisting only of eight leagues.

This place was formerly one of the most renowned silver mines in that part of the country;

* Tortillas are thin cakes, made of corn rubbed on a stone. They are the Mexican substitute for bread. Persons not used to them find them very tasteless at first.

now-a-days, the want of capital, in the present owner, prevents its producing the same annual amount as formerly; but its riches are yet unexhausted.

The day we arrived was a Saturday, and the miners, having received their week's wages, were enjoying themselves in crowds on the *plaza*, where, as is common in Mexico, music, drinking, and eating-shops had been established by the owner of the mine, in order that the money laid out by him in wages might return to him, before the new week commenced. An Irish gentleman, employed as administrator in the mine, came to see us in the evening: we chatted about former travels, California, mining in general, and other topics. He offered us a room in his house for the night, as the one we had was a very noisy one, being next door to a drinking shop.

In countries where, as in Mexico, money cannot purchase comfort, every spontaneous show of kindness is doubly appreciated, particularly if the traveller come from California, where the motto is, or at least was: "Every one for himself and the devil take the hindmost." It warmed our hearts to see the spontaneous kindness of this gentleman, exerting itself in a manifold manner to make two perfect strangers comfortable.

On taking leave for the night, our splashed appearance, and the fact of our travelling on foot, without baggage, led our kind-hearted host into the error of attributing it to want of means. In the frankest and heartiest manner he made us, to our amazement, an offer of pecuniary assistance. Recollecting that we were in Mexico, where only Indians and the poorest of the poor travel on foot, we inwardly excused his misconception, and only thanked him warmly, explaining at the same time that there was no need of trespassing on his generosity.

Next day, our destination was Santa Lucia, only six leagues distant. We commenced climbing steeper mountains than we had passed: the tropical vegetation began to change, till, at last, we saw nothing but oaks and fir-trees, and underneath them stunted grass. The atmosphere felt cool, and added much to our comfort in scrambling up our road, which, like most in Mexico, seemed to have been planned more on artistic than engineering principles.

Towards noon, we were approaching the descent of the ridge we had climbed all the morning, when we beheld, far below us, in a labyrinth of intersecting gullies, the red roofs of Santa Lucia. The

valley before us seemed dark with the bluish shadows of majestic peaks; their sides towards the sun glowed, here with golden tints relieved by the brown shade of projecting crags, there with spots of a bright emerald green. Slowly, in many volumes, white clouds were rolling through the valley, and the landscape underneath them was alternately enshrouded or lighted up, in fitful starts.

The descent to this little paradise was charming; thousands of flowers of all hues, amongst a tropical vegetation, replaced the sombre fir-tree, and the atmosphere was as mild and balmy as the breath of spring.

We took lodgings at the house of the *alcarde**, to whom our friend the Irishman had recommended us. After a hearty meal, we went to pay a visit to a countryman, of whose residence here we had heard in Panuco. He had been a physician in Durango for many years, and had retired with his family to this semi-wilderness for his health; the climate of Santa Lucia being considered a very salutary one for his complaint—pulmonary disease.

From this town we sent to San Sebastian for our baggage, which arrived safely in a few days. We set about preparing for a new start, in a new

* Every magistrate is called alcarde.

style, as we had to take our baggage with us, and were advised to take a guide. In all this we were assisted, most kindly, by our countryman, whose knowledge of the place and people was most valuable to us, and the few days we yet remained there we passed, very pleasantly, at his house.

Santa Lucia had been, before the Indians began prowling about the road, the refuge and place of outfit of all robbers in that district. But, since the great competition got up by the Comanches, the natives gave up the business in despair. Some of the old stock would venture out, now and then; but, in general, the neighbourhood was kept in pretty good order, owing chiefly to the energetic management of our countryman, to whom the government had delegated sufficient authority to keep down the worst class by the help of the better disposed of the natives. A few days before we arrived, a party had been surprised while stealing cattle; they were fired upon, two were killed, and two others taken prisoners. The latter the doctor sent on to Durango, under escort. On the road, the escort grew tired of their charge and hanged the prisoners on a tree. They returned with a tale that, the prisoners having mutinied, they had to kill them.

On the 21st of August, we started. We had

hired a muleteer for our baggage, who promised to carry it as far as Coyote, five days' journey from Santa Lucia, — fifty-four leagues. Further, we could not prevail either on him or any one else to go with us.

On the morning before starting, José, our muleteer, came to me and said that there was a person anxious to travel in our company; I told him I must see the personage before I could decide. Immediately a lean figure of a man appeared before me, bowed, informed himself of my health, and proceeded to say that he was a tailor, who had no employment, and wished to go to Durango. Never in my life have I, even in my own country, which is productive of fine specimens of the class, seen so complete a beau ideal of a tailor. His lean figure was as needle-and-threadlike as anything could be; and then the incomparable, melancholy smile — that of unrewarded merit — all combined to prepossess me in favour of the phenomenon. I told him to get ready. He proceeded merely to wrap his transparent *serape* more closely around him, took a cigarito from behind his ear, and bowed, as affirmative of his having completed all necessary arrangements to go to the end of the world.

That day, late in the afternoon, we reached Jocote, a little village consisting of ten houses belonging to cattle farmers; its distance from Santa Lucia is ten leagues.

Early next morning, we again started. We crossed a river, called La Barranca, of uncomfortable rapidity, as immediately beneath the ford are some falls. We ascended the other side of the river, and continued climbing for some time. Our road, for hours, then led us along the edge of a steep precipice, the depth of which seemed to be immense. Perfect darkness reigned at the bottom of this abyss; on the side opposite to us, enormous rocks were piled up into mountains of fantastical shapes; labyrinths of gullies ran between them, and gradually converged towards the great chasm, where they were lost in apparently bottomless depth.

In the afternoon, we turned a sharp angle in our road, and descried, in the distance, as it seemed to us, the gigantic ruins of an old castle, perched upon a peak arising from the depth of a ravine, and commanding our road. An immense tower flanked the walls on the western side; from its loopholes garlands of creepers swung in the air, and smaller turrets and bastions were nearer the base, which was hidden in luxuriant vegetation.

The deception, at first sight, was perfect, though our muleteer thought that it looked more like a chimney than anything else.

Towards evening, we crossed the ravine of Chapote, and ascended its opposite side as far as La Ramada. Here we took shelter for the night, and had the satisfaction of watching the last glow of day fading on the sharp angles of our enchanted castle. Our supper, consisting of the standard food in Mexico, eggs and beans, being despatched, we stretched our rather stiff limbs on the ground, and slept.

Next morning, we slowly ascended the main ridge of the Sierra Madre. It was hard work. Repeatedly we thought we had reached the top; but a new turn in the road would bring a still steeper ascent in view. Higher and higher we climbed, amongst fir-trees and detached rocks now and then blocking up our passage, our airy friend the tailor panting on behind us, spurred onward only by his fear of being left alone.

After six hours of hard work, we at last reached the top, whence the road leads over a plateau in an easterly direction, varied only by some occasional rise of ground or crossing ravine. An envious mist had risen and disappointed us of our

view in the direction whence we had come. But, in compensation, the temperate zone seemed to have lavished all its beauties on the plateau on which we now travelled. Magnificent clusters of fir-trees, crowding together in their sombre beauty, threw a deep shade on meadows with grass like velvet. Flowers of great variety, particularly a species of dahlia, of a pale violet colour, covered the ground entirely for considerable distances. We could not cease admiring the melancholy grandeur of these silent glades, which strongly reminded us of our own dear forests, where we used, in the spring of life, to play at "robber and soldier." A gray, clouded sky added to the delusion; but the bitter earnest with which such games were carried on here was told by many a rude cross looming from the shadow of fir-trees.

The scenery on this plateau became every moment more interesting. In the middle of its glades we encountered gigantic heaps of rocks, thrown together in the most capricious manner; here forming castles, there looking like tombs of the "Warrior Huns." Immense, isolated rocks, like broken off columns, surrounded at their base with smaller ones, contained, here and there, caves and curiously formed crevices. Now and then the

accumulation of these groups, extending over considerable tracts of ground, would, at a distance, look like the mouldering ruins of some miniature Balbek.

This place bears the unpoetical name of "Piloncillos," which means little loaves of sugar; probably so named by some unfortunate traveller, who, having to drink his coffee without sugar, traced, mournfully, this resemblance to the absent luxury uppermost in his mind.

It struck us what excellent strongholds these islands of rocks would form for parties of freebooters, and, involuntarily, we gave a look to the caps on revolvers and rifles. We had just done so, when, from out of one of these, a large rattlesnake rushed towards us, rattling most furiously. Poor fellow, it was his death-rattle; a stone I flung at his head ended his career, ignominiously. This snake was a beautiful specimen, of a bright yellow colour, about four feet long and as thick as a man's arm. It was the only rattlesnake I ever saw attack one unprovoked, and I had seen and seen killed hundreds of them in California.

At noon we halted before a large rock, which contained two capacious caves, with numerous small apertures over and around them. It was

situated a little off the road; here we lunched or dined, whichever appellation we chose to give to the demolition of our modest tortillas, cheese, and dry meat; and here we killed two little black rattlesnakes, of a species I had never seen before, one near the cave, and the other in our road on starting in the afternoon.

After having travelled for about an hour, a grand thunder-storm commenced. The crashes of thunder seemed to shake the mountains to their foundations, and the echo from their trembling sides multiplied and prolonged the reports, until they died away in distant growls. Never have I seen lightning so purple-red as on that day, and the *tout ensemble* of the storm was magnificent.

Neither our mules nor our tailor seemed to be of that opinion; but, by hearty cheers and heartier pushes, we kept them on the right track. Pretty well soaked, we arrived, late in the afternoon, at Chavarias, twelve leagues from La Ramada. Here we stopped for the night.

This little village, consisting of about thirty houses, is situated in an extensive glen in which numerous herds of cattle were grazing. To the east and west, wooded mountains border its two longest sides; on the south, a distant sheet of water

reflected the last rays of the sinking sun; and, to the north, distant mountains, cold and misty, closed in the perspective. Plenty of milk, and an unhappy fowl, a victim to our capricious appetite, made a splendid addition to our general bill of fare for supper. Contented in mind and body, we gave ourselves up to a delicious feeling of sleepiness, such as only the privileged traveller on foot can experience.

Next day, our road led us through nearly the same scenery as the day before, and now we commenced seeing traces of Comanche visits. Scorched posts and blackened walls marked the spots where houses had stood, until the flame of the Indian's wrath destroyed them; vegetation was already nearly hiding the bloody soil, where only faint marks still indicated the last, hopeless struggles of shrieking victims. Some charitable travellers perhaps found their mutilated corpses amongst the smoking ruins, and heaped those little mounds, that now, as mute commemorators of triumphant cruelty, pleaded, with greater eloquence than the human tongue, the tale of unavenged blood. We grasped our rifles more firmly, and inwardly vowed, whatever our fate, it should involve many a life of the murderous savages; and silently we

marched onward in the deep shades the woods threw over our road.

It rained all day, with that quiet obstinacy that seems to penetrate the skin and wet one to the very heart's core. Our day's journey was a long one, and the road was covered with at least a foot of water, as the perfect level of the glades afforded no draining to the grassy soil. It grew dark, and we splashed, wearily and silently, onward through the water. At last we saw in the distance the blackened gable-ends of some stone buildings, the remains of El Salto, a cattle estate that, a short time before, had been burnt and plundered by the Indians.

Here we took up our abode for the night, in a building that had been spared by the flames. A second floor, underneath the roof, to which we ascended by means of a ladder, gave us shelter from the rain, and comparative security against a surprise during the night. We obliterated all traces of our arrival, shut the mules up in a corner of another building, after cutting for them some grass, ascended our stronghold, and drew up the ladder. Our muleteer entertained us with a detailed account of all the atrocities committed in

the attack on this place, until at last we all sank to sleep, too weary to keep watch.

Towards morning, we were suddenly awakened by some fearful cries; we jumped to our arms. It was yet perfectly dark, and listening we heard a half-stifled voice come from a corner of the loft. With my knife unsheathed between my teeth, and revolver in hand, I crept stealthily towards the corner. Holding my breath, I distinguished at last the suffocated voice of our tailor. Immediately the thought struck me that he might be attacked by nightmare. A hearty kick I applied to the least bony part of the skeleton awoke him from his dream, but on his seeing a dark figure bending over him, he was thrown into another fit of howling. His yells for mercy were so fearful, that our muleteer, enraged at the unearthly noise, rushed on him and belaboured him mercilessly, until the flood of Spanish compliments with which he accompanied his blows, convinced our tailor that his bugbear was only a countryman and no Indian.

Daylight at length made its appearance, and ended the mental and bodily sufferings of our prostrate friend. Although with blackened eyes and swollen face, he greeted his delivery from darkness

with so comical a smile that it threw us into convulsions of laughter.

That day we came to the only inhabited place between Chavarias and Durango, a distance of forty-seven leagues. This place is a cattle estate, called "El Coyote." The buildings are situated on a rising ground, and are surrounded with a high wall, flanked by square towers and perforated by loopholes. The place, commanding an extensive prairie towards the east, looks like a little castle of old, or rather like a den of robbers, when one looks at the detachment of ragged soldiers kept there nominally for its protection. The hungry and squalid appearance of these warriors made me doubt a little their capabilities for giving effectual battle to Comanches. In truth, it is no wonder that their enthusiasm for fighting is on a low standard, as they are mostly pressed into the service, half starved by not receiving their miserable pay regularly, and to crown all, treated brutally by their officers, who are still greater cowards than themselves. In this place they had to buy their victuals at exorbitant prices, at a store belonging to the owner of the *hacienda* (estate), for whose benefit these poor wretches were kept there; yet he inhumanely charged them so high for the

simplest necessaries of life that their pay did not always suffice to appease the cravings of hunger!

Here our muleteer left us, as from here the danger on the road became more imminent. With a great deal of trouble and expense we at last propitiated in our favour two "veterans on half pay," who agreed to carry our baggage on mules, of which they claimed a doubtful ownership, to Durango, under the condition that we should travel as fast as they would go, as the danger would be augmented by any procrastination on the road.

Next morning, before daylight, we started. It was a beautiful day. From behind a horizon of wooded mountains the first rays of the sun penetrated, here and there, between the crowded stems of fir-trees, and shone aslant over the undulating prairie, verdant and blooming with thousand dewy flowers. Such glorious mornings are the moments when man feels all the rapture of life, exulting in freshness, vigour, and ardour. How we deplored the want of a few good fellows, who would have made the sight of a troop of Comanches galloping towards us the most welcome of sights, to enliven the foreground of our landscape. But, circumstanced as we were, things had to be done "on the sly."

We kept our pace pretty much in the time of a dog's trot, to keep up with our guides, who were pushing the mules as fast as they would go. Our tailor took his place behind the last mule's tail, too fearful to go ahead, and keeping in advance of us who trotted in the rear. At noon we made a short halt, off the roadside, and gave ourselves a little breathing, combined with some slight comfort for our stomachs. We soon took to our legs again, and so on until sunset.

During the decline of the afternoon the doctor and myself took the lead, as our lungs seemed to be in better condition than those of the rest, and by this arrangement the place in the very rear fell, of course, to our tailor's lot. In vain did he try to regain the mule's tail; if he did so for a time his strength was not equal to the task of keeping his place, so that we had to slacken our pace a little.

Darkness sank slowly on our road, yet we had to go on, as our task for the day was not ended. The moon rose and guided our footsteps over a road that began to be rugged and broken. All at once my friend stops and points to an object, half in shade, lying crouched on the road. We make a sign to our followers to stop, and, cocking our rifles, we carefully advance on one side of the

road, from tree to tree. Opposite to the object we halt to reconnoitre and await some movement. The form is human and naked, consequently an Indian; the attitude, as much as is discernible, crouching, like some one with his ear to the ground. It is no doubt an outpost of some larger detachment. To dispose of him with a shot would therefore be imprudent. I unsheath my knife, put my rifle down, cautiously measure my distance, and with a spring have his throat in my grasp. My knife is descending, when, to my horror, I feel, by the clamminess of his throat, that the hand of death has forestalled mine. In that moment the moon, for some time shrouded, breaks through the clouds and glitters on the scalpless skull of a body perforated with lance wounds. The face is contracted and rigid, and I see we have mistaken a Mexican victim for his Indian murderer. With a shudder we go onward, and find another and another in the same state, and so on until we count twenty-nine bodies! At last, we recognised in one the features of the Mexican lawyer, who invited us at Mazatlan to accompany him!

That heap of corpses was his party; they had all perished except one, who, at least, was not to be found. It seemed to us that they were killed

without much resistance on their part, as many of them had carbines still loaded in their cold grasp; and the Indians had so left them, ammunition being most wanted.

The tainted atmosphere of this frightful place of murder soon drove us away; the excitement of our nerves at this repulsive spectacle impelled us onward, and we marched forward until the moon set and our fatigue obliged us to go to rest near a little stream in a place called "Los Mimbres." Silently we ate our scanty supper, wrapped our serapes round us, and sank to sleep; thanking and trusting in the Almighty, who had so graciously watched over our fate.

Before daybreak we gathered up our stiff limbs, and put them with some difficulty into motion. We had very soon the satisfaction of seeing on the road some fresh foot-tracks of Indians, which can always be distinguished from Mexican tracks, by having the toes turned inward, and being without sandals, as no Mexican feet are.

Other signs convinced us of their having passed the day before, travelling in the same direction as we went. Still the bright sun shining on them gave them a look very different from the appearance they would have made by the mysterious light of

the pale moon. An occasional look at our arms, a scrutinising glance to the horizon in front, a smiling one thrown to the rear, on the woebegone countenance of our eternal scapegoat, preserved the equilibrium of our feelings and kept them free from all nervousness.

Towards eleven in the morning, we passed the deep valley of Rio Chico, and ascended a stony plateau, covered with cactus, long grass, and a peculiar species of palm. Three hours more, during which we passed the then deserted farm of "El Pino," brought us to the brink of a chasm, whence we hailed, with great delight and thanks to God, the church spires of Durango.

We descended the nearer and ascended the opposite bank of the chasm; and reached, after three hours more walking, the first suburbs of the town. These were mostly deserted, as they extend a good distance along the road to the town, which is considered scarcely safe at its very gates. There we submitted, with unwonted cheerfulness, to the search of custom-house harpies and to the inspection of passports, and reached at last, in safety, the nearest *meson* — that of "San Augustin."

# CHAP. III.

## DURANGO.

Speculations on *Fondas*. — Cobwebbed Coffee. — Stereotyped Bill of Fare. — Aspect of Durango, its Buildings, Suburbs, &c. — Decay of the Population. — Morning and Market Life of its Inhabitants. — Their Aspect and Midday Dulness. — Evening Revival. — The Alameda. — Mexican Cavalleros. — Durango Vehicles. — Sunday Evening after the Bull-fight. — Mexican Ladies *en Toilette*. — Their Tactics and Morality. — Their special Disadvantages. — Allowance to be made for them. — The *Plaza de Torros*. — Passion for Bull-fights. — Preliminaries of the Spectacle. — Further female Tactics. — Magnetism of the Eye and the Fan. — Entrance of Performers. — The Fight and its Victims. — *Picador* and *Banderillero* Feats. — Bull's Feats and Share of Applause. — His Defence and Sentence. — His *Coup de Grace* and Exit. — Brotherhood of *Aficionados*. — Their intense Interest and its Consequences. — Origin of Bull-fighting. — Occupation of a Mexican Gentleman. — Life of a Mexican Lady. — Her Intercourse with Strangers. — Her *Pasatiempos*. — Fancy-Martyrdom. — Its youthful Devotees. — A Carmelite Adonis. — A Fancy-Victory. — Dearly-bought Trophies. — Training of the Comanche. — His Appearance and Arms. — His Prestige and Tactics. — Theatre and Rapidity of Indians' Movements. — Their nomade Mode of Warfare. — Their feeble Commencement. — Panic soon caused by their Power. — Inadequacy of Remedy applied. — Mismanagement and Inefficiency of the Army, in Dress, Arming, Mounting, &c. — "Who are the Officers of such Men?" — Santa Anna's provincial Policy. — Its blind Selfishness. — A wise and patriotic Offer. — Its proved Efficacy. — Its insensate Rejection. — Despair caused thereby. — A "Dodge" by Yankee "Horse Marines." — Leipsig literary Manufacture. — Fact often stranger than Fiction. — Comanche Ferocity. — Compulsory Service. — A fearful Consequence of it. — The old Dame's Narrative thereof. — Further Consequences. — A Mexican Delilah. — Revenge beyond the Grave! — A Comanche Ambuscade. — Its ludicrous Success. — Reception of the *Heroes*. — Anniversary of Independence. — Mirth among Mexicans. — Government and "*medio pelo*" Balls. — Liveliness of the latter. — A Mexican Pistol. — Jealousy and Cowardice. — Pleasing Recollections. — Preparations for Departure. — Speculation on a Steed. — Experiment in Training. — Our Journey and Party.

THE room in the *meson* allotted to us had a more cheerful appearance than our cell in Mazatlan. There were two beds, a table, a bench, and less dust. The truth is, we were in a state of mind in which it was difficult to displease us; with a feeling of unfathomable content we began to regenerate the outward man. We inquired after the chances of breaking a twelve hours' fast, and were informed that various *restaurants* were close at hand. We sallied forth, resolved to exhaust the most varied resources of any bill of fare presented to us.

We eyed and passed the first *fonda* (*restaurant*), "de la Libertad," because, with our strong proclivity for indulgence in the pleasures of the table, it felt unpleasant to be reminded of republican simplicity, but rather inconsistently we entered, at last, the "Fonda Mexicana," as we saw no chance of a more promising motto, or of improvement in outward appearance.

We cheerfully sat down in a little dingy room, redolent with the atmosphere of the adjoining kitchen, and contemplated with heroic fortitude a table-cloth whose various stains made a bill of fare superfluous, and which afforded ample nourishment to thousands of buzzing flies.

Our arrival seemed to be unnoticed. The apartment was empty; the only signs of life in it, a deep-toned snoring, proceeding from a dark corner. There a venerable old man, with deeply pock-marked face, reposed on a bench. Some clatter with our plates recalled him to life and duty. He arose, yawned, rubbed his eyes, and solemnly approached us, with a napkin under his arm on which his head had just reposed.

The bill of fare was stewed meat, roast meat, and fried beans. To his astonishment, after having gone through it and retraced our steps, we called for a greater variety. Such a claim drew in the hostess, all steaming from the region of the kitchen. She set before us some sweetmeat, and we called for coffee. After a great rattling of keys and rummaging in the depth of a cupboard, she produced a cobwebbed bottle, held it against the light, and satisfied herself and us that it contained a dark, ominous-looking liquid. Warmed and steaming, it was then brought in for our consumption. One sip sufficed: the name of coffee was never mentioned for days subsequently, by either my friend or me, without an involuntary shudder; for whatever may be said in favour of bottling coffee, age can scarcely improve it.

As we did not walk fourteen leagues every day, we soon found the stereotyped bill of fare in all the *fondas* insupportable, and managed to get board in a private family, where cleanliness and a little variety made an excellent table for our moderate wants.

I forgot to mention that, on our return to the *meson*, on the first day, we found our friend the tailor lingering about the premises. He inquired when we would start again, as he wished to go on with us; we told him that time was distant yet, and dismissed him with a little gift. That was the last we ever saw of him.

The gate of Durango, through which we had entered, is situated on an eminence, from which there is a comprehensive view of the town. Its greatest extension is from north to south, over a grassy plateau, many thousand feet above the level of the sea. Various isolated hills rise abruptly, here and there, of which the "Cerro de Nuestra Señora de los Remedios"* stands in the northern portion of the foreground of the landscape. Its precipitous ascent leads to a church with a white tapering spire, the airy outlines of which seem to

* Mount of Our Lady of Remedies.

VIEW OF DURANGO FROM THE SANCTUARIO

melt into the blue sky. At the base of this hill the suburbs commence. Straggling houses, with flat roofs and whitewashed walls, are dotted along, intersecting lanes of *agave.** These plants form also fences for orchards, in which the snowy and rosy blossoms of peach and apple-trees mingle with the dark foliage of the fig, the pomegranate, and the orange, festooned with climbing grape-vines. Further on, the houses crowd more densely together, the flat roofs join one to another like one immense white parterre, and only here and there a tall cypress rises from the depth of an inner courtyard. Spire after spire comes in view, as the eye sweeps on towards the south; massive two-storied buildings dazzle the eye with their whiteness, and labyrinths of courtyards confuse it. Rising majestically above this mass of flat roofs, the towers of the cathedral form a picture of grace and strength combined; convents, churches, and a college, more or less gracefully erect their spires and cupolas. Further on towards the south, the compact mass of houses again dissolves amid the green of gardens and orchards, the long, concealed lanes of which

* Agave, the American aloe. In the North of Mexico, a spirit is distilled from it called "Mescal;" nearer the capital, "Pulke," a half-fermented drink, is made of it.

are denoted by detached houses as far as the eye can reach.

Immediately in front of the gate towards Mazatlan, the suburbs of the west commence; they are less extensive than the others, and bear the name of "Tierra Blanca,"* a sort of St. Giles of Durango. They reach to the low banks of a little river, over which some three or four graceful bridges of whitewashed stone lead to the main body of the town. Following the banks of this river, and extending nearly to the whole length of the town, on its side, is an alley of shady trees—the "Alameda," or promenade of Durango.

In the background of the whole picture, about a mile to the eastward, looms the sombre form of the "Cerro Mercado," isolated, rising like a gigantic wall from the plain, and rearing its craggy crest above all other eminences.

Not more than ten years ago, Durango numbered nearly thirty thousand inhabitants. A year of raging cholera commenced the work of desolation. The first appearance of hostile Indians disturbed agricultural labour, and contributed to produce, in a year of great drought, an unprecedented famine. The Indian disturbances continued

* Tierra Blanca, "The White Land."

and increased every year; so that at the time of my visit, in 1853, the population was reduced to eight thousand!

There was little life in the streets during the day; only early in the morning the market on the Plaza would send that animated hum through the streets, that seems like the audible breathing of the body, indicative of lively exertion. Servant-girls, with plates in their hands, or baskets on their heads, are tripping along hurriedly, either going or returning from market. Mules and donkeys throng the avenues to it, where their burdens are piled and offered for sale by their vociferous masters. The men of the poorer classes are all there, in their *serapes*, draped gracefully around them, mostly to hide some deficiency of dress, such as the entire absence of a shirt; all are driving bargains, with the most winning eloquence, either for themselves or others. In fact, some of them live upon this talent, and are a sort of "market-solicitors."

It is surprising to the European to observe the *tournure* which, in manners and speech, nearly all the lower classes of Spanish descent in America, possess. Their attitudes, walk, and all their movements, particularly those of the women,

have a native grace that surprises one on comparing them with their equals in station in Europe. They are nearly all well formed; seldom do you see a clumsy form, and never large extremities. This neatness of limb is their inheritance from the aboriginal Indians, whose blood predominates in them. Labour, such as women of our poorer classes have to perform, never curves their backs; yet they are not indolent; and, in that respect, are superior to the men.

Their national dress is highly becoming; the *Rebozo* especially, a shawl which they drape round the head and shoulders, is an inexhaustible resource in the hands of any of their coquettes. Beauty of face is amongst them about as scarce or as plentiful as everywhere else. Black expressive eyes are a more widely diffused gift.

Of gentlemen, you see here and there, in the mornings, a lonely rider taking his airing; and a few ladies, deeply veiled in their *mantillas*, glide round the corners of churches and disappear stealthily in their dark portals.

So soon as the sun has absorbed all the freshness of the morning, an intolerable dulness creeps over the town, which reaches its meridian at that time of the day, when even the few doors and barred

windows towards the street are shut, and even the last beggar, at the corner of the church, retires into some shady, secluded spot to have his siesta, like the rest.

With the declining sun, a gradual revival of activity takes place. At four o'clock, portals again open, saddled horses are led to front doors; carriages of past ages, or of less antique invention, are drawn out; mules are harnessed and beaten into life or obedience, and the *beau monde* at last makes its appearance. Away they all go to the Alameda, at paces proportioned by the qualities of their respective quadrupeds.

The *Alameda* consists of two parts; one, the long shady walk that follows the stream aforementioned, and at the southern extremity of it; the second part, enclosed by a stone wall, breast high, and with iron railings on the top, forming an extensive square. Six gates, four at its corners, and two on its western and eastern sides, admit the carriages, riders, and foot passengers; a broad walk, for the latter class, follows the inside of the square enclosure, and a circular drive—to which the four sides of the walk form the tangents—is assigned to the horses and carriages. Diagonal and rectangular roads lead to the centre, an open

and circular spot. The entire square is planted with thick shady trees; parterres of rose and other flowering shrubs follow the direction of the roads; and stone seats, everywhere in abundance, offer repose and ease to spectators and actors.

The plebeians are only to be seen on the outside and at the gates, where they station themselves as severe and pungent critics on the "get up" of the various parties entering and sallying. In the circular road, riders and carriages whirl past one another, just in sufficient number to produce a little hazard of collision, yet leaving room for action.

Mexican gentlemen are nearly all good riders; their seat on horseback is unexceptionable in natural ease and grace. The management of their horses partakes, at times, a little of affectation, particularly in promenades: apparently curbing their spirited animals, they are in reality forcing them into more foaming action. This affectation becomes thoroughly ridiculous when the horse, as it happens at times, is a perfectly inoffensive animal, imperturbable in temper and manner.

Horses in general, in that part of Mexico, are spirited, graceful, and of compact muscle. Though middling in size, they are often possessed of surprising strength, which they show, unmistakably,

in the part they take in lassoing; an operation I shall refer to hereafter.

On the whole, the "turn out" of the Mexican *cavalleros* is brilliant and certainly picturesque. Their high-pommelled and high-backed saddles are plated with silver, as well as the stirrups, bridle, and crupper. Their dress on horseback — the national costume — is highly becoming, and the height of their ambition consists in sporting a richly-embroidered saddlecloth, supposed to have been worked by the fairy fingers of some beautiful unknown. Thus arrayed, they dash and curvet alongside or past the carriages, bowing to their acquaintances, or catching the quick lightning of some apparently downcast eyes; and, as the heart of the rider bounds, the charger, full of the sympathy transmitted by the spurs, plunges, rears, and shakes the foam from the champed bit. . . .

The carriages, though filled with female attractions, are not always worthy in their appearance of the precious burthen they contain. At times you see a bevy of young creatures, all sparkling and smiling in freshness of beauty and *toilette*, trundled about in some gigantic machine — a Noah's ark on wheels. Contrast may enhance the beauty of flowers contained in a coal-scuttle, yet the effect is

rather jarring. More harmonious to the eye are some light Parisian or London vehicles filled with the beauty and the elegance of their occupants. Not that all the latter, however, are even pretty, but in the *tout ensemble* even the stiff and yellow maiden aunt (the thorn of the rose) helps to make up the pleasing effect of the *bouquet* presented to the eye of the spectator.

On Sundays, towards evening, after the bull-fight, all the benches on the walk round the square enclosure are filled with ladies returning from the spectacle. The gentlemen, on foot, flow in one long stream along these flowery banks, all keeping the same onward course. Now and then, a little eddy will be produced by new-comers trying to rejoin their friends, or foreigners that will go against the current (as the Mexicans think they do in other cases also); but harmony is soon restored, and the tide of the cloaks and black coats* rolls on with murmured conversation, and a laugh now and then, elicited by wit expended in honour of friends out of earshot.

Mexican ladies, *en toilette*, have adopted, in the main, the European fashions. The shawl has replaced the *mantilla* in the promenade; but, at times,

* It is only on horseback that gentlemen wear the national dress.

it is worn like the latter, shading the head, as their taste has as yet not been reconciled to bonnets. Whatever may be said in favour of the bewitching powers of the latter, it is only a set-off for a plain or passable face. A really beautiful head and face do best without it, as nothing can serve as a substitute for the waving outline of that natural ornament, the hair, nor for the graceful sweep of the head, neck, and shoulders. The hair is generally worn by the ladies in two simple bands in front, and two tresses behind, which, at times, are wound round the head like a diadem, giving a classical air to most faces, not entirely void of dignity in outline.

Thus equipped, they are ranged round the promenade on the stone-benches, in perfect consciousness of their powers: as elsewhere, glances are often shot at objects, on which much wit is exercised afterwards for the benefit of laughing bosom friends. Other more true-hearted and furtive glances are dealt out lavishly; for, as the social intercourse between the two sexes is confined to a rather narrow circle, the most has to be made of the *Alameda*, of a procession, or a mass, the latter taking the place of our theatres, concerts, &c. To that end, benevolent Nature—who always places the

remedy close to the evil—has endowed the sufferers with eyes so eloquent, that their language can never be misunderstood, after the least experience.

Parents and guardians may watch well all such messengers as doors, barred windows, and spies may serve to keep out; but the "winged messenger," that darts from beneath a dreamy eyelash, will defy their power, so long as nature kindles the fire of love in the female bosom.

The morality of women of Spanish descent is not in high repute amongst Europeans; yet, by most persons, this impression is carried far beyond truth and justice. Such impressions originate from the report of travellers, anxious for amusement on short notice, who consequently see only the worst—the scum that swims on the surface—as neither their time, facilities, nor inclination (perhaps) suffice to enable them to search for real worth.

In every society, access to the best portion of it is difficult; in Mexico more so, where fathers, husbands, and brothers, are careful with regard to the female part of their families.

The mass of the people in Mexico, particularly in towns, is poor: in trials, to which poverty subjects them, neither their Government nor their religious instructors lend them a helping hand. Unaided,

and tempted by a climate productive of sensual propensity, a large proportion of them sink, after a little struggle, into the depth of immorality. Some exceptions to this are of course to be found; and even those who are apparently on a level with the most abandoned women of Europe, preserve in reality a certain degree of self-respect unknown to their European parallels.*

Amongst the better classes, other circumstances take the place of poverty to beset them with snares unknown to the women of Europe; for whom an enlightened, educated society has smoothed the path of virtue. In their earliest education, an injudicious restraint upon their movements makes them, at first, aware of the existence of temptation. Those male directors who have the care of their consciences, either unwittingly, or still worse, with *malice prepense*, bring constantly before their mind's eye the picture of the weakness of their sex. However incredible and repulsive may seem to them at first such representations, repetition, and perhaps the example of a friend, further advanced in

* A fact which, I believe, is owing to the circumstance of their not being formed into a class, as in Europe, where, separated from all good, accumulated evil festers into corruption—a horror which is palliated only by the consideration of this class being a sacrifice to the well-being of their betters.

life, softens their harsh aspect; it becomes credible, feasible, and at last desirable.

> " Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
> As, to be hated, needs but to be seen;
> Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face
> We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

Like the women of the poor classes, they feel the bond of virtue oppressive in a tropical climate, and only pride, taste, and fear, strive in aid of an attenuated virtue.

Much allowance is due to all in such circumstances. The number in Mexico of those claiming such indulgence certainly exceeds that of our own fair sinners, of whom, possibly, more might be known, were suspicion on the watch. Comparing the merits of the two sexes in Mexico, (whose mutual influence there, as elsewhere, it is not easy to define,) it appears difficult to decide whether the men have an evil influence on the women or the women on the men; yet my belief, leaning towards the former supposition, is that, in spite of the men, there are good women to be found.

One of the largest public buildings in Durango is *la Plaza de Torros*, or Circus for bullfights. It is situated in an extensive square on the eastern extremity of the *Alameda*. Built of stone, its

extreme circumference is imposing, at a distance; but a disproportion, as regards height, impairs this effect in some degree. On a nearer view, its outside, void of all architectural ornament, gives it even a mean aspect. The interior makes a more favourable impression. Massive stone columns, at well-proportioned intervals, support the flat roof of the same material, which shades the spectators; the arena is spacious, yet of such proportions as, in effect, to keep all action near enough to be distinct, without destroying the pleasing illusion of distance, so necessary to all such spectacles. The whole enclosure is airy and cool, inviting one to tarry and see some life animating the arena.

Almost every Sunday a performance is announced. The performers, on horseback, parade the streets with music; and stories are set afloat among the townfolks of the various merits of the bulls that are going to fight. Of course there is always some hopeful devil amongst them, that has given proof already of his talents in defence, during his capture, and he becomes immediately the pet of the multitude who are pawning their last shirts or petticoats to go and see him die.

The passion for these spectacles amongst the lower classes equals, nay, outshines, that of the

"plebs" of the amphitheatre of Rome and Constantinople, as the latter had no sacrifices to make for their admission. Some of the better classes are equally tainted with this passion; even a few guileless doves of the softer sex are also betrayed into a hankering for the sight of blood. But they are an exception. The greater part go for the purpose of being seen, an inclination few women are insensible to: then comes the crowd that flocks to see them, and the rest, if there remains a rest, except the sick, have to follow, if they are not over fond of absolute solitude.

At three in the afternoon, the spectators are admitted; the multitude rush to their sunny side in the northern concavity of the circus (the portion partitioned off for them); here the best places are fought for, and successful and unsuccessful candidates exchange broadsides of a high-flavoured wit. Shortly after, the shady south side begins to fill with muslins and waving shawls; the atmosphere becomes more perfumed and paradisaical, and the sterner sex select their favourite positions. A band of music does its utmost to stay the impatience of the spectators, which commences to show itself by unmistakable signs. Yet they have to wait a mortal half hour, until four o'clock, when the performance commences.

In the meantime, vendors of fruit, lemonade, and confectionery-ware press through the crowded benches, offering, in shrill voices, their delicacies. Custom demands of young men, desirous of a reputation for gallantry, to offer up the sweetest of the dainties at the altars where they worship. But here their duty ends not; they are expected to expend all their eloquence to persuade their deities to accept the offerings. The first part of their duty performed without the latter would be considered a piece of inexcusable *gauchèrie*. Mexican ladies are shy at eating in the presence of men, a feeling originating, most likely, in the desire to confound all doubts of their ethereal composition.

The fact is that convivial meetings, such as Europe glories in, are unknown; and, when attempted, end in ludicrous failures. Whether want of custom produces this discrepancy, I do not know; but nobody who has not made the experiment can have an idea of the amount of nonsense it is necessary to talk before a lady will eat like a common mortal. At last they are persuaded, and then begins the comedy of a struggle between the natural inclination of eating and the wish to preserve their dignity under disadvantageous circumstances. Besides, the most has to be made of the

opportunity of giving people an idea how small the morsels must be, to enter such a mouth, and a well-timed smile also may show how perfect are the rows of pearly teeth. The whole of the process is carried on with the air of a martyr, undergoing such torture of her feelings only for your sake. I must remark, as a saving clause to their understandings, that they never attempt such airs with a foreigner, unless they are perfectly sure that the soundings of his intellect are on a level with that of their countrymen. All the while when, seemingly, the tongues are monopolising the attention of listeners, other communications, questions and answers are crossing the air silently. The electro-magnetism of the eye is in full operation, and fans assist, with all their power, those telegraphic dialogues. To the uninitiated, a fan, by its agitation, conveys only coolness to its owner; he does not see the heartburn it transmits to the one who is watching the capricious movement, until at last it is pressed to the bosom, as indicative of emotions in his favour going on there.

I should never end describing the machinery set in motion to entrap and be entrapped; but a trumpet suddenly sounded announces the beginning of the performance, and saves me from that dilemma.

Let us look into the arena. From the eastern gate, the performers issue into it, in rich Andalusian costume, and wrapped in their *capas.** Two and two, they march in procession opposite the Governor's seat, and bow; at a sign from the latter they throw off their *capas*, and disperse over the arena, taking their respective stations.

The troop consists of two *picadores*, four *banderilleros* †, one *matador*, two *lazeros* ‡, and two clowns in masks. One of the *picadores* gallops to the northern gate, and takes his station, with levelled lance, a few feet from it. Another trumpet sounds, and from the opened gate rushes in a white and red spotted bull. Simultaneously, the *picador's* lance enters his back, near the ridge of the shoulders: the bull shies, is diverted from his course, and rushes past the *picador* into the middle of the arena. The other *picador* gallops up: at ten yards from the bull he halts, levels his lance, and challenges the bull. The *banderilleros*, with their *capas* swinging about in their hands, attract

* Capa, literally cloak, but means here a simple piece of red cloth, wherewith the bulls are irritated.

† Picador, literally Pricker. Banderilleros—men with little flags.

‡ Matador—killer, despatcher. Lazero—thrower of the noose. Lasso—a rope of hide.

his attention towards the *picador*. For a moment the bull throws his head from one side to the other, glancing furiously at his adversaries, undecided only which of them to crush first. All at once he bounds at the *picador*, whom he gallantly singles out as the most formidable of his foes. The lance encounters his back, but slides onward, ripping only the skin. The bull is unchecked in his career, and brings horse and rider down with a shock that shakes the arena. A confused and dusty heap is writhing on the ground, under the merciless horns of the bull; but the *banderilleros* are there, swinging their red cloaks, stamping and shouting; the bull lifts up his gory head, and, in a moment, he pursues a flying crowd, leaving his vanquished adversary behind. Assistants have come, in the meantime, to the fallen *picador;* they draw him from under his horse, and carry him out senseless; but without a wound, as heavy leather breeches encase the parts most exposed to the reach of the bull. His horse, after a few efforts, gets on his feet; but the sight is sickening; it tries to walk, but it steps on its entrails and sinks to the ground.

The first *picador* now gallops up to the bull, who, in the meantime, has given up a fruitless

pursuit. There he stands, now again in the centre of the field, breathing hard from violent exertion. His wounds have covered him with blood; in his eyes sparkles fury; his mouth foams, and he lashes his flanks with his tail. The *picador* throws his hat on the ground before him, like a gauntlet of defiance; the bull takes it up, piercing it with his horns, and bounds against his foe. The levelled lance receives the onset; the *picador*, nearly doubled, bends on the quivering shaft; the horse leans over, stemming the ponderous weight, and its furious pressure gives way before the brawny arm of the *picador*. Thundering applause rewards the feat; the *picador* disengages his lance, and spurs his horse to another side of the arena.

Another trumpet sounds, the *banderilleros* throw away their *capas* and take, in each hand, a *banderilla*.* A young, good-looking fellow runs nimbly up to the bull, who now is stamping and ploughing up the earth, shuffling and throwing it into the air. The *banderillero* claps the two flagsticks together, the bull starts, gives one look to his tor-

* Banderillas are little flags on sticks, with a barbed steel point at the opposite end. Ribbons, paper, at times firecrackers, adorn the whole length of the stick, nearly hiding the steel point.

mentor, and rushes at him. The bull's horn seems nearly to graze his breast; but, as the beast passes him, he sticks the flags into its right shoulder blade. The pain caused seems to be sharp, and the red ribbons, adorning the bull against his will, make him rave. He throws his head about, he shakes his massive body, he stamps, kicks, and roars; but, like malicious wasps, the new appendages stick to him in spite of all efforts. Of a sudden he starts, with a bound, and, by swift evolutions, drives the performers into a body; away goes the confused crowd,—*picadores*, clowns, *matador*, *banderilleros*, and *lazeros* have no breathing time of it. The horsemen are soon out of his reach; some of the men on foot jump, with the help of their hands, the breast-high enclosure, and others, doubling on him, after gaining a little ground, avoid his pursuit. The bull is applauded, and another *banderillero* comes forward. His form is slim, but well knit, a picture of agility. He makes good his promise, he plays with the bull; like a swallow he seems to skim round the bull, ever near but never within reach. The bull grazes his jacket twice, and a fragment of some embroidery dangles from his horns. Again he rushes at him; for an instant the *banderillero* seems to remain

right before him; he stands on the tips of his toes; his arms stretched forward with the *banderillas;* his whole body quivers with elasticity; the next instant, by one astonishing bound, he saves his chest from the horns of the bull, after having planted simultaneously a flag on *each* shoulder-blade. Another thundering applause nearly drowns the sound of trumpets announcing the *matador's* performance.

An athletic figure, wrapped in a blood-red cloak, a sheathed sword under his arm, walks up to the seat of the Governor and bows. At a sign from the latter, he unsheaths his double-edged sword, waves it in courtesy to the ladies, and departs, with his cloak in his left hand. His adversary stands on one side of the arena, breathing himself, and shaking his horns all entangled in ribbons, dusty and bloody. The ineffectual attacks on the *banderilleros* seem to have taught him a lesson in tactics. He concentrates his energy more in short sudden attacks; he stands oftener on the defensive, and takes less notice of allurements to spend his strength on them, unnecessarily. The *matador* has need of all his agility, sureness of foot, and quickness of eye, to avoid some well-aimed "lunges" of the bull. The eyes of the animal

beam with a dark, ominous fire, and a low roaring precedes each attack he makes. Warily the *matador* moves around, watching, with keen eye, for the propitious moment to deal the deadly thrust. Everything is tried to draw the bull from the defensive; the red cloak plays provokingly before the eyes of the animal, which, little by little, is losing patience; it begins to roar, so that the arena trembles, and it envelopes itself in clouds of dust. On a sudden, it bounds, with levelled horn, against the red cloak. In one instant a glitter, like a pale streak of lightning, descends on the bull; the next, the arena shakes with the fall of the animal, pierced through the heart.

Amid deafening applause and flourishes of the band, the *matador* draws the red blade from his prostrate adversary, and bows deeply in acknowledgment of unabating applause. Nosegays, with valuable rings on them, money, trinkets, are showered upon him by ladies and gentlemen. The clowns gather up the gifts, the eastern gate admits four glossy mules, splendidly caparisoned, which, harnessed to the hind feet of the bull, gallop out with the carcase.

Generally five bulls are killed in one performance, and the larger the number of horses that perish

during it, the more satisfactory is the performance considered. At times, a bull turns out to be of a pacific disposition; he is immediately hooted from the scene. To effect his exit, the lasso-bearers throw their nooses over him, and he is dragged out ignominiously.

In the general roar of applause or disapproval, there is always distinguishable a leading chorus of voices, that keeps up the flagging spirit of every infernal noise, when all others seem exhausted. This chorus is composed of the brotherhood of *aficionados*. The general meaning of the term, in this connexion, would extend to all who are passionately fond of bull-fights; but by usage it is exclusively applied to connoisseurs, supposed to be found only amongst the better classes. They are mostly all young men, and generally sit together in a clique, the terror of all awkward *torreros* (bull-fighters). The slightest mistake, or mismanagement of the laws of the art, is immediately repaid by a torrent of abuse; witty at times, but never very choice in expression. And woe to him who shows a symptom of cowardice! for this he sinks under volumes of vituperations, accompanied with the most excruciating noises that can be contrived. To a calm observer, it is highly entertaining to see

these men, in the last stage of their wrath, their strained attitudes in bending over toward the arena, their flushed faces and gesticulations; they roar and scream until their throats are sore and their voices cracked. The most ridiculous sounds of falsetto pipe from their exhausted lungs, yet they go on attributing to their victim, amongst other opprobriums, the most odious pedigrees, tracing his descent from the most heterogeneous beings; the animal world is exhausted for parallels, and his blood relations receive a full share of their wrath. All this vociferation is often carried on in spite of a powerful band of music, trying in vain to make the cacology indistinct.

At length, the powers of the *aficionados* are exhausted, and they often suffer from sore throats for a month after. I have known some young men for whom the united authority of doctors and parents was necessary to keep them, for some time, from an amusement endangering the condition of their lungs.

Such is the madness produced by a spectacle, considered in all civilised countries, except Spain, as barbarous. But the imputation of bad taste, and worse feelings, those spectacles bring upon the communities that indulge in them, is nothing

compared to the influence of the slow poison that enters gradually the disposition of the constant frequenters of them; for it is well known that an amusement in which blood is considered the best seasoning, must soon be productive of cruelty of disposition, particularly amongst the less educated classes. But, in Mexico, and particularly in states like Durango, there exist circumstances that palliate this stain on the taste and principles of the people.

Large estates, full of wild cattle, were originally, in Spain, the primary cause of the custom of bull-fighting. This cause, in tenfold magnitude, is still in active operation in Mexico. There men have to learn, from their earliest years, how to manage wild cattle, and to avoid their dangerous attacks, during the process of catching and killing them.

It is natural that the bolder men should, by constant practice and trials of all kinds, raise their daily occupation to a kind of art. Their companions will flock to witness their feats, and the cattle driver becomes a *torrero*. How natural it is in a people to be fond of witnessing feats of skill and boldness in an art so perfectly akin to their daily occupation! If, notwithstanding these

extenuating circumstances, the increased opportunities of seeing blood should have an influence on their disposition, I believe the effect will be rather callousness than cruelty; and callousness to blood cannot well be called a very deep stain on the character of a man who, like a soldier, has to combat with circumstances in which he may see his own shed at any moment.

The daily occupation of a Mexican gentleman is divided between his horse, a few visits, a novel translated from Dumas, and a little gambling at night. Of course all these are put aside, except, perhaps, the horse, whenever any love-making has to be done. In Durango most of these persons, though passionately fond of music and possessed of taste and knowledge of it, were all poor performers, the vocal worse than the instrumental. It seems strange, and I have often wondered what could be the cause why, in most countries of Spanish America, good voices are so exceedingly scarce.

Besides the aforementioned amusements, frequent races divert their intellect and empty their purses. The most remarkable thing I noticed in their style of racing is the short distance by which they, very injudiciously, decide the contest. The time of some of the gentlemen is also taken up by their

service as escorts to the "sexe," in their religious excursions, particularly in processions with torch-light, evening masses, &c. That this service is not always conscientiously performed, may be imagined, as, for instance, when a brother, perhaps, is straining his neck to catch a glimpse of his distant fair one, and thinking the tendance on his sisters decidedly a great bore; while they, perhaps, in their hearts, are of the same opinion in regard to him, and from similar causes.

In cases of gentlemen enjoying the blessings of a married state, this service becomes paramount in consideration and strictness of performance. The Mexican husband, however relaxed in his own principles, takes a tender care of those of his wife.

Compared to the life of European ladies, a Mexican lady's life is sadly monotonous. *Torros*, processions, and masses, however frequent, leave long intervals: the *Alameda* is not always gay, nor the husband, mother, or father, or some other despot, always disposed to go out.

But the absence of more varied social pleasures, such as *soirées*, frequent balls, etc., gives the Mexican ladies time for the cultivation of friendships amongst their own sex; and, if the privation of the former exposes them to a want of polish,

the latter recompenses them by giving to their feelings a tone and depth, so often lost in the volatile movements of European fashionable life. Their education is generally neglected; but peculiar talents and disposition sometimes make up for the want of cultivation and opportunities for it; and occasionally one meets also with ladies who have been sent to Europe to be educated, as is often the case now-a-days.

In social intercourse with strangers, their behaviour is at first shy and stiff; but when you have overcome the first chill, you are pleased to discover a great deal of natural wit and quickness of intellect. In fact, in proportion as your first reception was cold, as warm subsequently will be their confidence in you (if merited); in direct opposition to the mode of procedure in the fashionable society of Europe, where everything new is warmly received, and, after some handling, coldly dismissed; for at best, if fashionable friendliness do not decrease, it seldom increases, and rarely does the hard varnish of worldliness melt into confidence.

I am far from believing polish of manner to be incompatible with depth and warmth of feeling; for, in pictures, you may sometimes see the highest

finish leave the effect of depth of tone unimpaired; yet few attain such excellence without a slight taint. But, in cases where superabundance of feeling requires tempering of manner, a little of that polish would serve as a safeguard against an overwrought tone of sentiment—and this is the case with Mexican ladies.

Music is the general favourite amongst the *pasatiempos* (pastimes) of the good folks of Durango, and there were two or three good pianists; one lady very proficient on the guitar, and two or three good voices. A good deal of their time is taken up with adorning altars and churches, on saints' days, for which purpose, a number of them generally contribute their means and labour. A new convent of the "Virgen del Carmen" had been established shortly before our arrival, and its church, small but pretty, had become, for the upper class, a sort of pet chapel, from which the vulgar were excluded, by a tacit understanding.

The reasons for this affection were twofold: the nuns were nearly all daughters of the first families, consequently their relations and friends; secondly, there had been sent from the capital a Carmelite monk, to regulate the institutions of the

convent, and he was a man of eloquence, wit, and beauty. These were the causes that made the chapel look always like a little paradise of flowers, illuminated with hundreds of burning tapers.

Many persons may well ask — "Is this an age to erect convents, even in Mexico?" Yet they would be still more astonished if they knew the degree of simplicity of character that prompted young women to fill the cells of this convent.

The transaction took place in the following manner. "*El Señor Obispo*," of Durango, had thought it advisable, in those times of general affliction, of poverty, and of murderous Indians, to found a meritorious institution, the operation of which would plead in favour of the distressed, at the Tribunal whence these punishments had been sent. Thus he represented the matter to the parents of rich daughters, who, thereupon, exhorted them to accept of the glory of being a peace-offering for a general salvation of souls. The latter, generally innocent, inexperienced girls, were dazzled by the brightness of the crown of *quasi*-martyrdom thus placed within their reach, and exempt, as they thought, from hardships. To them, on the contrary, it appeared rather pleasant to be a nun; a person so highly con-

sidered, and whose life is passed in the midst of all that is holiest. The dress, moreover, of Carmelite nuns was considered very becoming; and these girls must have seen, too, that quantities of sweetmeats were continually being sent from the convents as presents, and so they might easily conclude that their inmates must lead a very easy life; and, besides all this, would it not be a shame to disappoint "*El Señor Obispo*," who is such an excellent man?

Such were the reasonings of the greatest number, as I learnt them, word for word, from their bosom friends, who still visited them assiduously, at regular days of the week, appointed by the rules of the convent.

Amid this number of children in mind were to be found, no doubt, a few bleeding hearts, hiding their wounds from the world, and thinking that they never would heal. Some veteran devotees of professional reputation gave the necessary grave aspect to the establishment. A bustling abbess, middle-aged, and deeply skilled in the manufacture of sweetmeats, maintained a strict discipline. Such were the inhabitants of the convent, the new walls of which were contemplated with the profoundest disgust by all the young men of Durango.

The Carmelite monk, who was sent from Mexico, was well calculated to exercise a powerful influence over a congregation of women of ardent imagination. His sermons were full of glowing pictures of the soul-stirring worship of the Virgin. He roused their tenderest feelings as tributaries to his eloquence, when he spoke of a mother's unfathomable kindness, forgiveness, and mildness. When, with uplifted hands, noble features, and eye glowing with enthusiasm, he prayed for the salvation of his flock, was it strange that they all (that is, the female portion of his congregation) should love him, and love him more than an old preacher would have been loved? and every one can imagine that, if the lay part of his congregation thus adored him, what must have been the state of affairs amongst the immured flock confided to his peculiar care. When he had to return to Mexico, they managed, by unheard-of and skilful manœuvres, to procure his portrait, painted under the guise of a "San Pedro Pablo," as none but saints are allowed to inhabit, even in effigy only, the interior of a convent. How, after that, the worship of the other saints fared, for some time, I tremble to imagine.

We had arrived in Durango on the 27th of

August; and September was far advanced when I had, one day, an opportunity of witnessing the entry of some Mexican soldiers, after a "victory" over the Indians.

One morning, a lusty sound of trumpets called me to the balcony before my windows; and, from an opposite street, I saw issuing a troop of lancers, defiling slowly towards the Government House. In the centre of this troop rode two corporals, bearing two Indians' heads on the point of their lances, and various officers, with drawn swords, surrounded, pompously, this centre of attraction. The multitude, in exuberant joy at the defeat of their arch-enemies, pressed round the horses of the warriors, who, conscious of their merit, rode slowly and with stately bearing through the crowd of their admirers. I soon learnt the particulars of this *victory*.

It seems that a cattle estate, about ten leagues to the east of Durango, had been attacked by a party of about a hundred Indians. The inhabitants, after a short resistance, managed to escape, and communicated the news to a detachment of soldiers stationed, at the time, a few leagues from the estate. An active officer being in command, the march against the Indians was ordered imme-

diately. A hundred cavalry and a hundred foot arrived at the scene of action in time to surprise the Indians, still dispersed in the act of catching and killing cattle on a wide plain. The Indians fled; those on horseback then rallied and returned to charge the cavalry in an open line, with levelled lances. Under cover of this manœuvre, their men on foot escaped, and took advantageous positions behind stones, or any unevenness of the ground. The Mexican horse were broken by the charge of the Indians, but they wheeled about, and came to another hand-to-hand engagement, in which they killed six of them. In the meantime the foot of both parties were skirmishing; in which, I suspect, the Mexicans, with little cover and less skill in making use of it, got the worst.

The Indian horse, after having been dispersed, and finding six of their comrades wanting, returned furiously to the charge, to recover their bodies. They succeeded in bringing away four of them, and fled at last, as the infantry had come up to the support of the cavalry. How many of the Mexicans were slain in this encounter I was unable to learn; but I suspect they paid a disproportioned price for the heads of two Indians.

The peculiarity of the Indians, in risking every-

thing in the recovery of the bodies of their slain, is partly caused by the wish to give them the last rites, (what they consist in I have never been able to ascertain,) and, partly, by the knowledge that each of their heads is worth two hundred dollars to their captors. But that they succeed nearly always in this, and that the Mexicans only as a rarity get now and then one or two heads, can only be explained by a more detailed view of the respective qualities of the antagonists.

The Indian, and particularly the Comanche*, is born heir to an athletic frame and undaunted spirit. Long before he can lift his father's bow or lance, he is proficient in the principles of their use, by having, as his only playthings, a miniature bow and lance. He is put on the back of a steed when his legs can scarcely reach half way down the horse's ribs; and yet he has to balance himself and preserve his equilibrium in the trot, the general pace of the cavalcade of women, baggage-horses, and spoil. The sun, the rain, wind, and cold tan his skin, until clothing it would be superfluous,

* The Mexicans call them Comanches, but I doubt whether they belong to that tribe. I believe them to be a conglomeration of various tribes, or remains of tribes, that left the neighbourhood of the truculent borderers of the Western states of North America, to go and prey on the helpless Mexicans.

and he thinks only of ornamenting it. So he ripens early into a young warrior, who, like the young panther, follows the old in the chase.

The immense cattle estates of the northern provinces of Durango the Indian looks upon as his own, and from these he draws his annual supply of food and means of locomotion. Horses and mules, fast travelling animals, are driven by him to the boundaries of the United States and exchanged for rifles, powder, and blankets. Although he becomes expert in the use of the rifle, as it is generally only a "Yankee notion" made for sale, it soon gets out of order; and, powder and caps being finished, he returns to his bow, on which weather and carelessness have no influence.

His appearance on horseback is imposing. Mounted on the swiftest of the Mexican breed, with a blanket instead of a saddle, his naked frame painted red and black, bow and quiver dangling from his back with their flowing ornaments of scalps, beads, &c., in his right hand he swings his lance, and on the left arm he bears a round shield. This latter is of infinite use to him: made of strong hides, it covers the greater part of the upper portion of his body, and resists a ball from a long distance, unless hit at a right angle; to prevent

that he keeps it in constant motion, so that the balls generally glance off. It is studded all over with pieces of brass, pearls, and looking-glass. When opposed to riflemen he catches the rays of the sun in the latter, and tries to confuse their sight by reflecting the glare into their eyes. However all this may be calculated to intimidate his foes, it is nothing compared to the terror their imagination conjures up when they recollect the unfailing success of the Indian, his unrelenting cruelty, and his animal ferocity.

This *prestige* gives the Indian his infinite moral superiority, and is his best ally. His tactics are also well calculated to insure victory over an enemy to whom military knowledge is, as yet, only an unwieldy armour. The operative bodies of Indians are composed, generally, of horse and foot. The latter either have led horses, for sudden advances or escape, or they jump up behind the riders, on an emergency. An open engagement is commenced always with two or three sham attacks of the horse, during which they engage the attention of the enemy with shouts and yells, and brandishing of lances. Under cover of this the foot advance and try to get as near as possible, taking every advantage of any *terrain coupé*. Then

they commence a well-aimed fire. If they have only arrows, their aim is the head only, as the breast of the Mexican is often covered with a cuirass of leather or steel scales. Their arrows are not dangerous at a distance much exceeding fifty yards; and very seldom fracture a bone, if not sent from a much nearer distance. This may be partly attributed to their having only flint heads.

The *terrain* of their theatre of war, in the states of Durango and Chihuahua, is singularly favourable to all their strategic movements: endless tracts of perfect level, intersected with bare mountains, nearly everywhere accessible to good horses, and full of places of retreat and defensible passes, well known to them, by a constant wandering about for years. Over this immense territory a scanty population is scattered; only here and there is there a town, and some few farm-houses; the rest is devoted to cattle estates.

All the movements of the Indians are sudden and rapid; they appear as if fallen from the clouds, at some place; bear down all resistance, if resistance be made; collect the horses, mules, cattle, and women they wish to take away; kill and destroy what they cannot carry off; and all this is accomplished in a few hours. By the time the news of

the disaster reaches a place where means of resistance or retribution are at hand, the Indians have put a safe distance between themselves and the smoking ruins, where relations may search for the corpses of their kindred.

Often, having scarcely hidden their spoil, they appear, striking terror and confusion around, at some place in a direction diametrically opposite to that of their first foray. This gives rise to erroneous calculations as to their numbers; the two distinct actions being attributed to two different parties, whereas, in reality, one and the same party performed both.

They can well afford to move rapidly, as horses killed in a day's galloping are replaced without cost, from the great number that accompany them from the nearest cattle estate. They are said to accomplish, easily, a hundred miles in a day, if hard pressed, and not too much encumbered by spoil.* This mode of warfare is congenial to their habits, which are nomade. Three days is their

* In such rides they change horses twice, and even three times. The native Californian accomplishes the same distance on one horse, and I have myself ridden a distance of sixty-nine miles, from five o'clock in the morning until twelve o'clock in the day, on a fast trotting mule.

longest stay at any particular place. Thence arises the difficulty of surprising them, or even tracking them.

Such was their mode of waging war, and such the extent of their means, at the time I was in Durango. There had been a time when they were far less redoubtable, but it was past. When, coming from the boundaries of the Western States of North America, they first arrived in Chihuahua and the north of Durango, they were exhausted from a long journey, their spirit was broken, they were scantily armed, and all nearly on foot. That was the time when a hundred well-mounted *rancheros** could have crushed the evil in the bud. But want of public spirit, a despicable selfishness, an indifference to the sufferings of neighbours, and an infatuated blindness to the most evident of consequences, allowed the first depredations, caused by necessity, to go unpunished. The Indians grew bolder. They soon equipped themselves with horses and arms, and when the first steps were taken to repress the evil, the means proved to be inadequate, so sudden had been the growth of the enemy.

Each successive wavering, as to the policy of

* A kind of yeomen; a term referable here to freeholders of small cattle estates and agricultural farms.

adopting energetic remedies, strengthened the spirit of the adversary, until, at last, the whole of the open country had become no longer habitable; and the towns and larger cattle estates, fortified with walls, ditches, and towers, were the only places that offered comparative security for life and property. The soldiers, scouring the country in all directions, never came in time to the right place; or, if so, were either beaten or suffered heavy loss. The rich silver mines in the mountains could no longer be worked, if not protected by a large community and soldiers. Every train of merchandise had to be escorted by a large number of soldiers and volunteers, and, in spite of all that, heavy losses were incurred by attacks executed by the Indians with incredible boldness. A panic seemed to have seized on the hearts of all who called themselves men, and the appeals of some more deserving of the name were not listened to by a craven multitude. To crown all, to show how utterly their foe despised them, a party of those Indians galloped, one day, through the suburbs of Durango, lancing a few individuals, and carrying off some women. This happened not long before our arrival.

The *physique* of the class from which the army is recruited is as good a material for making

soldiers as need be. The men, though generally small, are of wiry muscle, agile and quick-sighted, and capable of enduring fatigue and want. But how to set about making soldiers of them? The very first steps taken to that end entirely preclude success, as the system of pressing is employed. Any chance that remains for making good soldiers in spite of this is neutralised by the rest of the process. As Government has only the lowest classes to choose from, the young men of those classes manage, at times, to evade, so effectually, all pursuit, that it is obliged to have recourse to over-filled prisons, to recruit the army! A moral poison is thus introduced into the ranks, where other causes facilitate and propagate a general infection. Scanty pay, often dishonestly withheld by peculating paymasters, producing intervals of actual famine amongst the soldiers, is one of the auxiliary causes to moral infection. Relatives of the hungry soldier—his wife, sister, or sweetheart—have to contribute for a meal to him; if they are too poor for that and the soldier vicious, they are prostituted for a supper, or for means of dissipation. Should this fail, or should he hesitate to employ those means, nothing remains for him but stealing or starving. How many will those be who prefer the latter?

If any new comers to their den — *el cuartel* (barracks) — feel qualms of conscience, in the beginning, the general example very soon removes them. Discipline, such as regards only respect for a superior, is rigidly enforced, but its laws are often capriciously interpreted. Cringing cunning may violate, unpunished, many a law, and informers are encouraged. Every spark of spirit is at the mercy of the humour or caprice of the officers, who have the power of awarding corporal punishment. Some may think the latter evil necessary amongst characters so depraved, or at least that it is not felt amid so much other moral depravity; but they err. Men of whom it is expected that they will face death without shrinking, must never be subjected to treatment so degrading; for it may be imagined that a man may be void of all morality or honesty, and yet may possess the courage of the wolf that is base enough to feed even on carrion. But this essential qualification for a soldier is destroyed, whenever the stick falls on his back; for he either becomes a coward or plots against his officers.

The uniform of the soldiers, for every day's service, is ragged; that for parade is of a faded, gaudy finery; which forms, with their bare feet, the

oddest possible contrast. The infantry is armed with musket and bayonet. The musket is second-hand, and seldom serviceable for sharp-shooting, the only method effectual against the Indian. The red man feels reverence for the rifle only. This disadvantage in the arming of the soldiers, which might be partly bettered by their naturally keen eyesight, is increased by the little practice Government allows them for becoming good marksmen. Ball-cartridges are never plentiful with them, and they are economised to be almost entirely thrown away in action.

The uniform of the cavalry is nearly in a similar condition with that of the infantry; at times a little better; but to see spurs on bare feet, in stirrups, would make such soldiers the laughing-stock of the most beggarly Cossack. They are armed with lance, sabre and carabine. For the use of lance and sabre every Mexican displays a natural talent, agility and quickness of sight: *l'arme blanche* is his *forte*. The carabine is a useless popgun, dangerous, at times, only to the bearer of it, as the original material is bad, and age and hard polishing have given it a tendency to capricious explosion.

The Mexican, of all classes, is born a good rider, particularly in states like Durango and Chihuahua; but he is not always as good a master to his horse.

This will prepare the reader to learn that the horses of the cavalry are miserable jades. This paradox, in a country teeming with good horses, may be attributed, first, to original bad choice in the purchase, from want of means or peculation; secondly, to want of discipline in enforcing the taking care of the horses; thirdly, to hard service in the pursuit of Indians, who change their horses twice or thrice in one day, while the lancer spurs his one until it drops from exhaustion. Rations for horses also are never plentiful where those of the men are scanty; for, if given out abundantly, the hungry wretch of a rider sells or exchanges part, or the whole of it, for food. Horses therefore do not thrive in the Mexican service: the best of them are lean, and generally have sore backs, which remain in that state to the last hour, when their impatient undertakers, the John-Crows, commence their feast upon the poor animals, before they have quite done with life.

"Who are the officers to such men?" every one will ask, as such men can only exist where the officers are worse than they. Those grades of officers that are most essential for keeping the machinery of discipline and order in motion and good condition, are mostly filled with characters the refuse of all other professions; sons of families just respectable enough

to imbue them with pretensions to the outward badges of a gentleman, but who never attempt to carry the imitation further. In the higher ranks, sons of the better families are to be found: their education, as regards general information, is good, but their training in military science is neglected. Courage, such as is the European officer's attribute —an uncompromising courage—is rare amongst them; and individuals to whom the name of coward is no burden can be found among them. Comparing officers and men, courage is more common among the latter; but constant ill-success, under bad leaders, extinguishes self-confidence—the aliment of valour.

Such being the condition of the only remedy the Government applies to the evil of Indian aggression, how far the former is capable of coping with the latter may be easily imagined. This representation of the deplorable state of the Mexican army refers particularly to the troops far from the capital; for, in it, Santa Anna, in 1853, had a far more efficient and better-conditioned army, selected from the best men the population of the provinces afforded. Probably he thought it expedient not to meddle with this disparity between forces under his own command and those of disaffected provinces. In the

town of Durango, I had the pleasure of seeing two or three noble exceptions from the general scum of officers; particularly a captain, named Navarro, whose bravery and comparative success were the more remarkable under circumstances so adverse to both.

To a European, such misgovernment of a country must seem almost incredible; but a still lower degree of blind selfishness in the policy of the Government came under my observation, at the time of my visit in Durango. The ordinary taxes — such as the capitation tax, those on liquor, on land, mines, export and import of certain articles — were not only vigorously exacted, at a time of general distress, caused by misgovernment, but were increased. Nay, a tax was added, that weighed particularly heavily on the poor: it was called "*Peage.*"* Every beast of burden, of draught, or for riding, had to pay a tax on entering any market town. The only source the small farmer had for obtaining ready money was thus taxed, at a time when, without this tax, the small profit on his farming was scarcely sufficient to support his family.

All at once appeared a glimmer of hope for re-

* Peage, literally toll for bridge or ferry, means here toll for the use of roads.

demption from the general despair. A proposal was made to the Government, by a wealthy gentleman, a man of well-known talent, enjoying the confidence of all the northern provinces, having for its object the complete extermination of the Indian atrocities.

The means he proposed were specified as follows:—He engaged to arm and support, at his own expense, a *guerilla** composed of both natives and foreigners. Their organisation and command were to be under his direction. He offered to become responsible for all damage done by the Indians, after the lapse of two years, from the commencement of active operations. He adduced proof that his fortune afforded ample security to the necessary extent of such an engagement. He demanded, as reimbursement for his outlay, the usual taxes on those silver mines which could not be worked under the existing circumstances, in the provinces of Durango, Chihuahua and Zacateccas.

The precise number of years he asked for their being pledged to him, I am uncertain of; I believe it did not exceed much the amount of five. No

* Guerilla, a body of partisans, meaning here a corps of volunteers.

doubt it was an adequate recompense, if one considers that the State of Durango alone exported, formerly, by Mazatlan, one million of silver dollars yearly, and that the exportation from Zacateccas exceeded that amount. But the man that dives for a lost purse is certainly well entitled to a share of it from an owner who cannot swim. By the time he presented the project to the Government, he had convinced the public already of the efficacy of his plan, by experiments on a smaller scale.

His extensive cattle estates and townships of the silver mines in the State of Zacateccas were inhabited by a hardy race of *rancheros* and miners. He picked out the most trustworthy amongst them, and presented them with good rifles. He encouraged target-shooting, by liberal prizes. When his troop had become proficient marksmen, he gave them arrow-proof leather cuirasses and swords, and mounted them on swift horses. Gradually he convinced them of their superiority over Indians, by their being able to defeat them while still at a distance, where their arms were of no use. Self-confidence being thus created, these men became the terror of the Indians in their neighbourhood, and the red man soon gave a wide berth to the boundaries of "El

Gavilan," the main estate and silver mine guarded by the rifles of the *guerilla* of the same name.

As far as his power went, he also assisted his neighbours, who contributed nothing to all this. Every one saw the possibility of relieving the country from its curse; and every one expected that the Government would now step in and sanction an undertaking so urgently needed and so sure of success.

A period of anxious expectation followed. The negotiation went through all those official forms, equally tedious in the weakest as in the strongest of governments. At last, some time in October, the answer became known: "Not accepted!" The ostensible reason was, that the army was sufficient for all purposes. No doubt Santa Anna was influenced in deciding thus by fear of jealousy on the part of the army, his only prop, which might consider such a project a direct insult and too public an announcement of its inefficiency. Fear of placing power in the hands of a man of talent, in distant provinces, smarting under oppression, had, most likely also, its share in the answer. Upon the whole we may not be unjust toward Santa Anna, in attributing to him, in this affair, the feeling of the dog in the manger—a sentiment

quite in accordance with the envious and grasping disposition which characterises him.

And so this salutary and meritorious project fell to the ground; but the name of its author will always be mentioned with esteem and respect by all Mexicans of the northern provinces. His name is Maldonado Granados; he is a Guatemalan by birth. I had afterwards an opportunity of becoming acquainted with his family in Guatemala, and found it, as will be seen hereafter, of high respectability.

The doctor and myself could not help sympathising with the poor natives when utter despair of the future seemed to sink on them! and we felt it so much the more, as we had already enjoyed, in imagination, the prospect of an opportunity to learn more of the Indians by joining Granados' guerilla, for a time.

Under the Governor Moreto* an attempt was made, in 1849, to form a *guerilla* of foreigners. A party of adventurers, for the golden fleece of the

* This man's name is in so far interesting, as he had obtained the government of Durango by "riding the city," as his prototype did, of old, in Italy. (Vide Hallam's Middle Ages, page 160, or Villani — "*Castruccio corse la città da Pisa due volte.*") Shortly after our arrival in Durango, he was deposed by Santa Anna.

West, passed Durango on their way to Mazatlan and San Francisco. The party was composed mostly of "Greeks" of the Western hemisphere, a few sons of "green Erin," and one or two Teutons. The Jason that led this hopeful expedition was a Captain Box, who had held some subordinate commission in the Mexican war.

The Governor proposed to them to fight the Indians, at the rate of two hundred dollars per head of each Indian; delivered in good condition. They took the contract, and returned shortly with some samples; but the Governor hesitated about payment, as some article or another of the contract was said to have been violated by them. They disagreed and left. Malicious tongues whispered that their samples had not been genuine, but resembled strongly the heads of some tame Indians who live in "Pueblo Nuevo" and other villages to the north-west of Durango.

The bad success of these foreigners led the Mexicans, for a time, into the error of thinking all foreigners incapable of coping with the Indians. Had they been at all acquainted with the qualities of the famous corps of "Horse Marines," they never would have employed those mounted Argonauts.

A peripatetic German scribe, in the service of the book-craft of Leipsig, having heard of the adventures of this party, and deeming them a theme he could make literary capital by, describes them to this effect:—Forty heroes of the Western States of America arrive in Durango. Durango is in mourning; for Indians had besieged the town and had demanded, as the price of its ransom and of their leaving the city unscathed, two hundred virgins of the best families! After much painful hesitation the demand had been complied with, and the virgins have just departed. *Hinc illæ lacrimæ!* therefore Durango groans. But the sympathy of the sons of Freedom is now roused, and forth they sally to fight the Indians and rescue their captives. Battle, victory, and the recovery of the two hundred ensue; and the spectacle closes with a soul-stirring *tableau* of the intense gratitude of the townsfolk, of the disinterestedness of the Yankees, and of their magnanimous departure; beautiful eyes growing dim with tears, as the last stately form of this band of heroes is darkened by the shade of the town-gate!

Every one will see, that in the representation of such facts, some indulgence in poetical licence may be permitted. It strikes me, however, that this

licence is superfluous (especially when the facts are invented) in writing on a country where the every-day occurrences are often of such a soul-stirring nature and such deep pathos, that their description, colouring, and outline should rather be subdued and softened than swelled by any effort of imagination. As an example of simple facts being often well worthy of the sympathy of readers, without either colouring or exaggeration, I shall recount one that happened shortly before our arrival.

A gentleman of the family of Lopez, in Durango, was proprietor of an extensive estate in the neighbourhood of that town. He was in the habit of taking drives to it in company of his wife and family, as the distance was short, and danger never had shown itself in that direction. Precautions, such as an armed escort, were thus soon abandoned, as no accident ever gave warning of need for them.

One day, he was returning to town in his carriage, with his wife, his sister-in-law, his little son, and a single servant, who acted as coachman. He had arrived at the Cerro Mercado, only a mile distant from Durango, when the carriage was suddenly surrounded by a party of Indians.

He must have read the awful fate pending over him and his companions in the horrid countenances

that surrounded the carriage; for his powers of moving a limb seemed to be paralysed. Not so the coachman; somehow or another, he managed to escape; but, all at once, struck with remorse at his flight, he retraced his way so far as to become a spectator of the dreadful scene that ensued. He said afterwards that a fascination came over him at the sight of what was enacted; that, although his heart sickened, to turn away his eyes he found impossible, and his feet seemed to be rooted in the ground.

The first victim of the fury of the Indians was Mr. Lopez's sister-in-law. Half dead with terror, she was dragged from the carriage, and violated. When the heartless savages laid hands on Mr. Lopez's wife, her piercing screams nearly moved the cowardly coachman to rush to her assistance; but he saw her husband inactive, sunk in the stupor of despair, so he remained inactive too. Their first crime perpetrated, the ferocity of the Indians was next indulged. Both women were scalped.

During all this time, the Indians attempted nothing against Mr. Lopez; they only kept a strict watch upon his motions. The cause of this forbearance was certainly not a feeling of mercy;

more likely was it that of a refined cruelty. Now a tall Indian approaches, and stretches his hand to seize the little boy, who has crept under the carriage seat. The boy cries, "Father, help!" This cry seems to electrify Lopez. The cries of his wife had not been able to rouse the husband; but the child's wail arouses the father. He seizes a double-barrelled gun — his only weapon. One shot scatters the brains of the tall Indian, and the boy creeps to his father's feet. A second shot lays low the foremost of a crowd that now overwhelms father and child. At this the coachman fled, and arrived in Durango, to distract with his tale the remaining relations of the family and the whole town of Durango. But when pursuit was made, the pursuers found only the four corpses, mutilated to such a degree that they could scarcely distinguish the husband from his wife or sister-in-law, except by the size of the bloody heaps.

In many conversations I had in Durango about Indian affairs, the name of Antonio, as one of their most dangerous leaders, was frequently mentioned. I inquired about his antecedents, and learned the following facts: — He was by birth one of the peaceable Indians of Pueblo Nuevo. He was pressed into the service, and became a

lancer in a regiment of horse stationed at Durango. He is said to have disliked the pay, the food, and the discipline of the service, which dislike is not very astonishing.

A detachment of his regiment was sent to garrison the cattle estate of El Salto, which we saw on our journey from Mazatlan. He was in this detachment, and is said to have taken a still more violent dislike against the service, as the owners of the *hacienda* sold him his tortillas and frijoles at exorbitant prices. These owners, and particularly an old woman, are said to have ill-treated Antonio, by a long series of petty annoyances. A reciprocal hatred, especially between the said old woman and Antonio, sprang up; and, one day, Antonio was reported missing, horse and accoutrements included.

Some time elapsed; the soldiers were often absent from the estate escorting merchandise along the road. When they returned, one day, they found the houses burned, and the dead bodies of the inhabitants strewn about. Some groans attracted their steps to a corner where an old woman, with scalpless skull, seemed yet struggling against death. Assistance was rendered to her; and, strange to say, she survived, although the opera-



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tion of scalping is nearly always followed by death.

In Durango, the old woman completely recovered, and made a good business for some time by showing her hairless skull, and recounting, to shuddering audiences, the frighful scenes of which she had been a witness and a sufferer—and a contributing cause. She maintained that Antonio, the deserter, "the incarnate devil," as she called him, was the instigator and leader in the foray; that she had recognised him in spite of his war paint, and that he, with another Indian, had scalped her. "They knocked me down," she said; "the strange Indian held my feet, and Antonio held my head between his knees; and as he sat behind my head, on the ground, he supported his feet against my shoulders. He asked me whether I recollected the poor soldier Antonio, and how I had treated him? I said yes, I did, and he well deserved it. Then said he, 'I have come to pay you for that.' I told him he might go to the devil. Then he squeezed my head yet tighter, pulled out his knife, and caught me by the hair. I cursed him, and he cursed me, and then he cut all around my head, that I could see nothing more from the blood, nor speak; but I said to myself I would live, however

hard he should try to kill me. Then he commenced pulling my hair, and pushing with his feet against my shoulders, and I swooned; but, thanks to the Virgen del Carmen, I am well now, and I will see him yet on the *garrota*."*

The intensity of the wish to live and be revenged had, it would seem, supported this old woman through tortures under which thousands of men would have sunk. She had not raised a cry for mercy, she had clung to life if it was only to have an opportunity to accuse her enemy and die; but fate had willed it that her revenge should be gratified further than she ever could have hoped for.

After the attack on the "Salto," a series of similar occurrences took place, with a rapidity and success that left the people mute in terror. Antonio's knowledge of the stations, movements, and habits of his former fellow-soldiers, made him invaluable to his new friends, the Comanches, and he very soon became a leader amongst them.

For a considerable time, all efforts to take him proved abortive, and were attended with great losses, until, at last, a simple yet antique stratagem was thought of. If Antonio knew the habits of

* A scaffold for execution of criminals, by means of an iron collar breaking the neck.

the soldiers, they, as well, were acquainted with his, which were neither chaste nor temperate. A daring Delilah was found. In a little half-deserted village she gave Antonio an assignation. There was plenty of *Aguardiente** provided, and Antonio made a jolly night of it.

The next morning, when he tried to collect his stupified senses, he found himself bound to a mule, "in the hands of the Philistines," and travelling towards Durango. His Indians, who came in the morning to the village, according to his previous orders, did not find him; but they got upon the tracks of the escort, and a furious pursuit was commenced. In the middle of the day they came up with the escort, and a bloody fight ensued. The escort was mostly composed of *Rancheros*, the most manly class of all Mexicans. In the *mêlée*, their swords showed a decided superiority over the Indian lance, and they gave the Indians a severe lesson. Without further molestation they arrived safely in Durango.

I saw them enter; they were a fine body of men, and well mounted. Antonio was tied, in a highly uncomfortable position, on his mule, so that I could form no idea of his appearance.

* Ardent water, or spirits.

Of course, the joy of everybody was great; all the soldiers got under arms, for even an attack upon the town was feared; but the few days that were occupied in the form of a trial passed over without any disturbance. The old woman, the special friend of Antonio, was the chief witness for the prosecution. On the third day after his arrival, the *garrota* was erected, and all Durango crowded to the execution. Not wishing to witness the latter, yet desirous of getting an idea of Antonio's appearance, I went to the prison, from which I saw him issue. He was of middle stature, and good features, on which the thought of approaching death cast no shade. His movements were easy, and his whole bearing showed his indifference to the phantom of a scaffold before him.

When the iron cravat was adjusted about his neck, he is said to have expressed his confident opinion that he should see his friends in the next world, where going now, and he would make preparations to pay them back in kind yet, whenever they should "come up"! The old woman is said to have dipped her handkerchief in his blood!

Towards the middle of September, I was one day taking my customary walk to some public baths that are situated in the northern suburbs of the

town, when three *Rancheros*, mounted on horses covered with foam, dashed through the street that leads to the Government House. Something has happened, thought I; so I followed in their track to learn the news. I saw them pull up at the steps of the colonnades of the Government House; they ascended with heavy steps and jingling of spurs, and soon roars of laughter issued from a crowd that had immediately overwhelmed them on the landing-place.

This merriment seemed to me rather enigmatical; but it increased, when the crowd dispersing communicated the sounds of laughter through all the streets, and among hundreds of acquaintances. After some time, I became acquainted with one of the most ridiculous, and disgraceful incidents in the history of cowardice.

It appeared that a troop of two hundred lancers were on their way from Zacateccas to Durango, sent thither as a reinforcement for the garrison. Near a place called "El Arenal," a hamlet then deserted, the lancers were filing between the stone fences of the *potreros* (grazing ground) that follow the road, on both sides, for a considerable distance. Of a sudden, a few arrows were shot at them from behind the fences and bushes inside of them; and some

Indians on foot became visible, jumping from cover to cover, and firing more arrows. Some lancers were wounded already, and the gallant officer in command gave the word to sound "fast trot." No attempt at dislodging the enemy by flanking parties was made; away they went, riding along in a confused mass between the stone fences, whence a most galling fire kept pace with them.

The *Rancheros*, who saw all this from a neighbouring eminence, swore that there were no more than fifteen Indians, all on foot, save one, on horseback. The soldiers left very soon about twenty dead behind, and fifteen were wounded; while they were dashing now pell-mell forward, to get from among these dangerous inclosures. This piece of abject cowardice seems scarcely credible; but it did not stop there. The horse of the mounted Indian had, most likely, been in the Mexican service formerly; for, on hearing the continual signals of the trumpets, that now wasted their breath to restore order, it cleared, with its rider, a low part of the stone wall, rushing into the thickest of the confused ranks. In this rather equivocal position, the Indian preserved his coolness; he urged his horse to still more violent action, whirled his lance round his head, and yelling dashed through the shrinking

ranks. An old corporal, burning with shame, shot down the horse, although no command was given. The Indian, with incredible agility, got to his feet and escaped from under a tardy storm of balls, sabre cuts and lance thrusts. The *Rancheros* still heard his yells of derisive defiance, as he joined his comrades; and seeing the troopers still continuing their flight, they spurred their horses to prepare a fitting reception for the Zacateccas *heroes*.

In the afternoon, they made their entry. If they had had a forénoon's entertainment by the Indians, the populace — men, women, and children — gave them an afternoon's salute, to which the Indian arrows would have been preferable, had they been men. Of course the valour of the commanding officer and his comrades was not intimidated by a populace who had only eggs and rotten oranges for their weapons, so they dashed through them and gave their version of the day's exploits to the authorities. Nevertheless, they managed, somehow — under the plea of fatigue, perhaps — to get some of the "foot" of Durango to go and bury their dead.

Could Hidalgo, who in the same month, in 1810, shook off, with his shout of "Libertad," the Spanish yoke, — could he have foreseen that such cravens would be amongst his descendants, the

foresight would perhaps have suppressed that magic word, to prevent a blessing being turned into a curse.

I must state here, however, that subsequently a court-martial was held on the officer in command, and that he was cashiered.

A few days afterwards, the anniversary of Independence was celebrated. A victory over the Indians would have been perhaps the worthiest tribute for the occasion; but, in lieu of it, the people had plenty of balls, and made the most of them. In the Government House, one of the finest buildings in Durango, the grandest ball was given, to the *élite*. The inner courtyard of flagstones was converted into an extensive ball-room, and tastefully decorated.

There were assembled much beauty and finery, music and spruce cavaliers; but the solemnity of the occasion seemed to weigh down and suppress all spirit of liveliness in persons who were not accustomed to meet, in such numbers, for the purpose of amusement. The grave looks of the dancing couples produced a ludicrous contrast to the lively motions of their feet, and the livelier waltzes of Lanner. It seemed as if some mischievous spirit had set a funeral train a dancing,

with mourning in their faces and the devil in their feet.

Mirth, among the Mexicans, thrives only in the narrower circle of friends and nearer acquaintances; a strange face congeals the first bubbles of joy in their blood. Artificial means of melting statues into life, such as some countries employ for this purpose, with great success, were neither, on this occasion, over-abundant, nor of the right kind. Some faint pops, at ridiculously long intervals, spoke of a languid champagne under languid consumption. These languors accounted for that of the fête, for no sparkling foam hurried the glass to the lips; a sober fluid, void of all *esprit français*, settled quietly, after a faint "fiz," into its native character of poor cider. A few Government officials, superintendents of the supply, seemed to appreciate its qualities more highly; and on them it had quite a lively effect, contrasting strangely with the general mournfulness.

I found opportunity to pass a quarter of an hour in company of a female wit, who had at least the courage to speak out. I listened for some time to her libels on her countrymen in general; but the subject being too sad to bear much wit, I left her for a more interesting one. This was a young

lady of a little more feeling and very beautiful eyes, that gave an irresistible force to all she said or looked. For about a quarter of an hour, I looked into those black eyes, in spite of their long, trembling eyelashes, and felt that it was time to look elsewhere; so, as everybody went to supper, I went with a friend to take a walk. He proposed that we should have a peep at another of the many balls, of all classes, given that night. As I did not think of returning to the dull Government ball, and as it was scarcely midnight, I agreed; and we went to what is called a ball *de medio pelo* — a term applied in Durango to a class bordering, on one side, on respectability, and, on the other, on the directly opposite quality.

The pretensions to respectability of the frequenters of such balls are founded upon dress, and a certain polish of manner, which scarcely suffice to screen a bias they have to vulgarity and vice. Yet they are not void of talent, and their parties show certainly more liveliness and wit than those of their betters. I was always fond of getting a knowledge of all classes of society, which I consider the only means of appreciating rightly the position of one's own. So we went, of course armed, as the streets are, at night, not always safe

in all quarters, and the society we were going to was fond of being enlivened by armed demonstrations. My friend, a resident of Durango, knew his lawyer to be at the ball; so, by the influence of the latter, we got into a corner of the *sanctum sanctorum.*

The assembly was already in an advanced state of liveliness; the whisperings and titterings of the couples had swelled to a hum, and eyes and faces were beaming with animation. Abundance of liquors were pressed upon timid fair ones by elderly gentlemen, outshining the youths in gallantry and eloquence. The musicians were enthusiastic, and elderly ladies kept no longer the constraining influence of their eyes on the smiles and motions of their blooming charges; but, glass in hand, chatted amongst themselves of their concerns, and of bygone times.

Mexicans, in general, are abstemious; but, on particular occasions, they will look a little longer into the glass than is compatible with gravity of demeanour afterwards, which it is the more difficult for them to preserve, as they are unaccustomed to resist the influence of drink. Such was the case here. Amongst the gallants most conspicuous in elegance of manner was one of the

officers of the Zacateccas band of heroes, in blazing uniform. He was the admired of many a fair one, to whom his noble bearing contradicted clearly the calumnies of doubt as to the courage of him and his comrades. He seemed to be anxious to confirm their favourable opinion by some act in accordance with it. He surveyed the ball-room from one end to another, applied occasionally some stimulants to his budding valour, and seemed at last to have selected his man. He sidled up to my friend, who, at some distance from me, was engaged in conversation with some acquaintance. The reasons that probably caused this choice of a victim were twofold; my friend was a small man, besides being a foreigner; and seemingly alone amongst a crowd, never very enthusiastic in favour of any European.

To make the story short, he cast derogatory reflections on foreigners in general, and on the one before him in particular. The scene became interesting and hopeful. I came up in time to hear him assert, with loud emphasis, that by his hands had died Englishmen, Germans, French, Americans, and others.* In a moment my friend sidled close

* "Entre mis manos han muerto Ingleses, Alemanes, Franceses, Yankes y otros.

up to him, whispered something in his ear, and gave him a peep at the handle of a pistol, in an inner breast pocket of his coat. The talisman acted with wondrous suddenness. A slight paleness replaced, for a moment, his flushed colour; but immediately he was himself again, he cast a look of unutterable fierceness on the smiling pair of us, and — retreated.

At that moment, a sudden cry in the street, a scuffle, and then a tumult, near the door, were heard. For a moment, everybody seemed paralysed; the next, some rushed through the doorway, some through the windows, to see what was going on in the street. A minute after, the bleeding body of a young man was carried in, under the wail of women, and laid on a sofa. The cause and incidents of this catastrophe were the following: — This young man had excited the jealousy of another, by dancing too often with his sweetheart. The incensed lover engages two of his friends in his interest, and the three go into the street. The unconscious rival is called out to the street, under some pretext or another. As he passes the doorway he receives a thrust from the blade of a sword cane, a pistol is snapped at him, and a stone, dashed in his teeth, bears him to the ground. He had time

to recognise one of his assailants — the one who gave the thrust, the instigator of the plot; and he saw all the three run down the street, and disappear in darkness. Suffice it to say, that the victim survived; his three assailants were sentenced to severe punishment; but whether it ever was executed, with all the rigour of the law, I know not, and much doubt; for, in Mexico, a sentence and the execution of it have not the same certainty of connexion as cause and effect.

October and November saw us still in Durango. The Doctor exercised his profession occasionally, of which we shall immediately hear something. He frequented chiefly the society of our countrymen, established as merchants in the town, as he was not very perfect in Spanish. I was more in Mexican society, so that I did not see much of him, though without exactly losing sight of one another. The remembrance of this time has always been grateful to me. Some families, with native kindness, made the sojourn amongst them a constant round of amusement to me, an unknown stranger. The young men of these families and myself congregated, generally in the morning, in the house of one of them, that of the Ariagas. Here we either had a bout at fencing or mounted on horseback,

and went duck-shooting or bathing. In the afternoon, a ride to the *Alameda* or to some races, on a small scale, that were very frequent there, were our standing occupations. In the evening, music or conversation passed the time, or an impromptu ball *en famille;* or, now and then, one more in form, and consequently more stupid. The house of a German lady, who keeps a boarding-school for young ladies, offered also many a pleasant evening, enlivened by the wit and good sense of the amiable hostess.

Thus the foot of time trod lightly over days of pleasure, in which I read pretty deeply in the book of the human heart, which, under the genial influence of social intercourse, shows, leaf after leaf, of gay and sad, of beauty and deformity. When I had understood its most essential chapters, I closed the volume, and prepared to depart from Durango.

Some time in October, I had seen, at a bull fight, a white horse, mounted by a *Lazero*, displaying exceeding grace and spirit. The owner was a Spanish merchant; for it is the custom of some gentlemen to give their horses to *Lazeros* in the bull-fight, in order to accustom them to the process of lassoing.

An offer to purchase the horse was refused; yet

I kept my eye on it, and trusted to the chapter of accidents for help in obtaining it. What made me so pertinacious to get this very horse were the following reasons: — the journey before me was a long one, so that the horse needed to be strong and enduring: the danger on the road was of a kind from which it was prudent to try to escape, if possible: that resource exhausted, the last chance — that of turning to bay and fighting — must be tried. To perform that successfully, the horse must be swift, and besides that, agile, for the proper management of the sabre.

All these qualities I was convinced the horse possessed, and in such just proportions as are seldom met with. I must confess, moreover, I was enamoured of his swanlike neck and flowing mane, and of a dark flashing eye, bespeaking a spirit of no mean temper. All this might be held temptation enough.

The *arendadores* (trainers) were trying to break it of a habit of rearing at mounting — its only fault — and they did not succeed. The owner mounted it one day, and was nearly killed. A few days after, his tempter (viz. myself) appears with the money bag; a timely twitch passes through the

sore bones of the merchant, he pockets the money, and the horse is consigned to me, with a curse.

For a few days, I sought to familiarise my future fellow-traveller to my sight; and, in spite of a good deal of snorting and smelling, sugar and conversation did wonders. Nevertheless, I knew that the first day of my mounting him would be a struggle for mastery. Every usual method of breaking his habit of rearing having been found ineffectual, I was determined to try the worst, if necessary; and had thought of a rather violent and dangerous experiment.

My plan was, on his rearing, to throw him on his back, by swinging myself out of the saddle, and keeping the reins in hand. This is easily done; as, in rearing, the horse is brought, with the slightest effort, to loose his equilibrium, and then the word is, "Quick, out the saddle!"

On the trial he reared, as usual, so soon as he felt my left foot pressing the stirrup; but I got into the saddle; and, as he pawed the air and snorted, I at once swung myself from the saddle, and brought him to the ground.

At first, I thought I had overdone the matter; but, instantly, he jumped up, trembled, snorted, and looked rather foolish. I spoke to him, and

mounted again, and he never reared from that time.

This is the horse that had before it a journey of more than seven hundred leagues. I got made a pair of substantial saddle-bags; an excellent saddle, that fitted its back to a nicety, I had purchased some time before; sword, pistols, and revolver were cleaned, and I went to see whether the Doctor was ready to start. I found him abundantly ready, as he was tired of Durango. Another young gentleman, a countryman of ours, with whom I had become intimately acquainted, had also finished his preparations to journey with us, so that we agreed to start on the 19th of December.

# CHAP. IV.

## FROM DURANGO TO MEXICO.

The Start.—Commissions and Leave-taking.—Feelings of Exultation and Sadness.—Our Steeds and our Armament.—"Diary of a Physician."—Close of his Practice.—First Night's Quarters and Supper.—The best Stirrup-cup.—Dust, Heat, and Friction.—Stone-hard Saddle the best.—Tactics of Bargaining.—Mexican Lassoing.—Lassoing Bulls.—Equine Ingratitude.—Extensive *Haciendas*.—A Gorgon of a Landscape.—The Demon of the Scene.—Suspicious Reception.—A mining Town.—Its Aspect of an Evening.—A hymning Procession.—Grooming on a Journey.—Stable Policy.—A Stable-thief and his Penalties.—Mexican Politeness.—Special Use of the Lasso.—A Struggle in the Noose.—"Your Money or your Life."—Road Civilities.—Road Engineering.—Fortified Smelting-works.—Charm of being well mounted.—Our Spyglass; "There they are!"—A Run for it.—The Indians no Myth; *Patriotas*.—Gratitude to their Captain.—A real *Restaurateur*.—Zacatecas and its Characteristics.—Its Cathedral, Alameda, &c.—Good Roads and blue Noses.—A suspicious Party.—A Word and a Blow.—Painful and tedious Results.—Chateaubriand and Convalescence.—Excellence of the Ranchero Class.—A Specimen of it—and of true Heroism—and of the reverse.—A Ranchero Family.—Respect for Parents.—Ignorance of and Kindness to Strangers.—A Family Concert.—A Day spent in Sunshine.—Aguas Calientes, a Model Town.—Lagos, its Site and tasteful Architecture.—Its stylish Surprisal.—Skill and Moderation in Marauding.—Theft by a Landlord.—The Mexican Saddle, and its Advantages.—One of Nature's Masterpieces.—The Diadem of the Creation.—Nearing the Capital.—Arrival at Queretaro.—A magnificent Aqueduct.—Institution for the Benefit of Highwaymen.—Artificial Bloom.—Pulque, the national Nectar.—A solid Square.—The Charge.

EARLY on the 19th, I started from my bed with that peculiar energy which is felt when the first thought after a sound slumber is that of a journey

before one. I went to the stables, where my *schimmel* greeted me with a neigh, clear and sonorous, like the *réveille* of a trumpet. His breakfast was looked after, and I went to see my fellow-travellers. The Doctor was quarrelling with his horse, which showed a very natural aversion to saddle-bags, and Mr. W—— was winding up some business, which it had been impossible to finish before; ample time thus remained at my disposal for leave-taking, more lengthy than I had originally intended.

As my journey lay through the capital where Fray Valentin, the Carmelite, resided, innumerable messages of *memorias* and *abrazos* were confided to my care. If the latter were sent by youthful female friends, I took care to receive them, not only abstractedly, but positively, and of sufficient warmth to resist the cooling influence of a long journey. The day before, I had said adieu to those eyes I had communed with at the Government ball; and as I paced my room on the morning of the departure, I became guilty of terrible havoc amongst *glorias* and *memorias*, *ojos* and *despojos*. Such is the fate of men,—the chance ray of a soft eye may unexpectedly bewilder their intellect, in spite of all studied scepticism on such

subjects. Travellers suffer most frequently from such inflictions, but are also more quickly cured, by taking to the road, where even the remorse at foolish sentimentality quickly evaporates.

At last all was ready; a stirrup-cup of wine was emptied to the health of our friends in Durango, a second one to propitiate the god of travellers, and away we trotted through the long streets, and passed the town gates, in all probability, for the last time. A strange mixture of exultation, dashed with a feeling of sadness, expands the heart on leaving a place where the stay has been sufficiently extended to allow intimacies to germinate: the pang of separation serves but to tone the feelings to higher sensibility to the prospect of wandering through new scenes of natural beauty. Thus we felt as the sound of the bells of Durango grew fainter, and a wider horizon of plain and hills expanded gradually before the impetuous pace of our horses.

We mutually congratulated ourselves on the apparent condition of our horses, promising capability for all the exigencies of a long journey. The Doctor was mounted on a powerful bay, of great stride; and, although a little ponderous, not void of swiftness. Von W—— had a fawn-coloured horse,

with black mane and tail; graceful, strong, and swift, but of smaller size and gentler disposition than mine. Our means of defence were as follows: the Doctor had a double-barrelled rifle, light and efficient at a great distance, besides a Colt's revolver. W—— had a brace of double-barrelled pistols and a long knife, the latter an excellent weapon in a country of lassoes. I was armed with a sword, well balanced in the handle, and shaped for cut or thrust. I had holster-pistols, and a Colt's revolver, attached to my sword-belt. Thus we had twenty shots ready for action, which, if not misspent, would open, in most obstacles of flesh on our road, a gap big enough to push through. As a very useful utensil for both warlike and peaceful purposes, the Doctor carried a good spy-glass, in one of his holsters.

Our road led us, on the first day, over an immense plateau, generally grassy, now and then sandy. Besides the cactus, a tree called *mezquite*, (thorny and scrubby, with leaves like the acacia,) prevailed in the vegetation of the occasional woods. The road was good, even and broad, generally lined by endless enclosures of *agave* or of stone-walls. We passed the "*Arenal*," the famous field of the Zacateccas heroes, where a few houses were

still void of inhabitants. Here the road became sandy, as the name of the place indicates; we slackened the pace of our horses, and indulged more freely in conversation.

The Doctor now gave us an amusing account of his practice in Durango. His first patients, like those of every new comer, were of the poorest class; but their ailments did not always belong exclusively to a doctor's department.

"If it was not the time for my being dragged, daily, through all the suburbs of Durango, to see patients," he said, "they would come and see me. A prescription would first be asked for, gratis, of course. Then a scene of sobbing and sighing would follow. If I inquired for the cause of such behaviour, I would learn that they had no money to pay the apothecary. Unfortunately I had a medicine-chest, amply provided, and had thus to furnish medicine also. Now and then, I would flatter myself that I had done with the members of some family, after having furnished them with medicine as well as advice; when, on fumbling with the door-handle, they would turn a woe-begone and piteous face on me, as if they shrunk from a new phantom of some want or another, debarring their exit, and urging them to a new sup-

plication. If I was foolish enough to take any notice of the manœuvre, a long string of family misfortunes would come forth, as a prelude to begging for a *real* or two, to breakfast or dine with. That such practice was not calculated to improve my finances, you can easily imagine; still I might have shut an eye to all that, if things had stopped there.

"One night I was called to a very bad case, as they said. It was nothing new to me to go at any hour to see their sick; so, that time, a thought of refusal never entered my head, although it was a disagreeable night. Through dark and dirty lanes my female conductor and I stumbled and waded until, all at once, I found myself all alone. The next moment a knife flashed before my eyes, and an uncourtly voice asked for money. This new mode of demand was a step beyond the extent of my good-nature. Along with my surgical case, I had put my Colt's pistol in my pocket, from an old Californian habit. The click of the cock changed the tone of the supplicant, who at once acknowledged his mistake, mumbled a 'beg pardon,' and vanished into the dark.

"Such calls upon my capacities as man and doctor disgusted me with my practice. I removed

my lodgings to the remotest suburb, to avoid the necessity of kicking my patients out of my rooms. There, at last, I found comparative security, and was enabled to prepare for my departure."

We were greatly entertained by these medical adventures, and sympathised with the Doctor's ill-luck. The fact was, his reputation could only be established by a certain lapse of time, as his character avoided, scrupulously, every shadow of charlatanising, to gain publicity; and such a modest mode of proceeding prolongs in Mexico, even more than in other countries, the establishment of a doctor's reputation.

As we had not started very early in the day, it was evening before we reached an estate called "La Punta," ten leagues from Durango. In most estates of importance, one wing of the quadrangular main building is destined as a *meson* for travellers. In such we found here a room and a supper, savoury and ample, even for the extent of our appetites. Before partaking of it, we had provided for our horses, rubbed them dry, looked at hoofs, shoes and back, and procured Indian corn and its straw for their repast After our supper, cigars were lit, we chatted, wrapped our

*serapes* round us, and enjoyed again, for the first time, the luxury of a traveller's night-rest.

It was yet dark when we rose, and gave our horses their last mouthful before starting; —a good practice to keep them fresh during a long day's travel and fast. In the meantime, chocolate had been prepared for us, which can be got nearly everywhere on the route we were travelling. Chocolate is the nourishment that best prepares one for a day's ride, as it does not encumber the stomach, and resists its cravings longest.

In the evening, I had collected ample information regarding the following day's road; a necessary precaution, to which I always adhered. We had furnished ourselves, in Durango, with a list of the towns and distances on our route, along with a sort of map; but inquiry on the spot is always necessary.

After cleaning our horses' backs, most carefully, we saddled, girthed tightly, and mounted. No traveller on horseback can be too careful about three points in the condition of his horse: the Mexican enumerates them thus, —*El lomo, los cascos, y la boca* (the back, the hoofs, and the mouth). He who takes care of these, and has a horse originally good, will be enabled to perform on it journeys of extraordinary length.

As our intention was to buy a fourth horse, to carry our three saddle-bags, we diverged from the main-road that leads through "Nombre de Dios," and directed our way to the cattle estate of San Felipe. Endless thickets of *mezquites*, dusty and giving little shade, tired our eyes with their monotonous appearance. The dust of the road was not rendered in any degree more tolerable by the increasing heat of the sun, so that we stretched our necks to unseemly lengths, to discover our place of destination.

The first effects of unaccustomed friction became also visible in our party:— the Doctor moved uneasily in his saddle, now and then, and apostrophised his horse in round terms, insisting on an easier pace. But his bay was deaf to all remonstrance of bridle and spur, and still tossed his rider with the same pertinacity and indifference.

We had all furnished ourselves with leathern breeches, such as the Mexicans wear; they form excellent protection against wear and tear in a journey; but even with them a person unaccustomed to much riding in a hot climate will suffer a good deal during the first days, particularly on a high trotter. W——'s horse had an easy pace,

yet he also found his saddle very hard that day, and thought of remedying the evil by putting a blanket on it. This is a very erroneous plan, as I told him, and advocated the principle of a stone-hard saddle, producing less friction and keeping cooler.

At last we descried, at a distance, on a wide and verdant prairie, the houses of San Felipe, ten leagues from La Punta. Although there was no *meson* amongst the buildings, a room for us and a stable for our horses were hospitably assigned us. The owner was absent, and as the *administrador* was a young bachelor, without a housekeeper, we had to enlist the wife of some other functionary, to provide for the culinary department.

I found, by indirect inquiry, that the few horses in the stables were not for sale; their value or prices I learned in the same manner; for, in Mexico, no purchaser thinks of showing his real intention until the seller has committed himself, by mentioning the outside price of the article; from which point the bidding downwards commences; a hateful operation, but one that nobody can avoid, unless he choose to pay double or triple the value of a horse. There are no standard prices in Mexico. If you want to sell, there is no price too low; if to

buy, none too high: to accomplish, favourably, one or the other depends on the individual talents of purchaser or seller. Any show, or even appearance, of absolutely needing a thing is perfectly ruinous to buyers, as the most unlimited advantage is taken of circumstances.

In our case, therefore, without saying a word of our intentions, I offered to accompany the *administradòr* in his afternoon's ride, to look at the horses in the field. I soon had marked the one I preferred, and ascertained his outside price; so I offered carelessly to purchase it. As my man had seen that our horses were in good condition, and we therefore in no absolute want of one, he was reasonable, and we soon came to an understanding.

Here I saw some of the *vacceros* (cattle drivers) hard at work with their lassoes. I had seen a good deal of lassoing in California and elsewhere; but I still felt interested in an operation extremely hazardous, skilful, and giving the most animated aspect to a landscape. Here were to be seen a motley herd of horned cattle and horses rushing across a wide stretch of country, before three or four men on horseback, bending over the necks of their horses, and swinging the lasso over their heads.

By skilful evolutions, the horses are separated from the rest of the herd: one *vaccero* rides at full speed to outflank them here, another to circumvent them there. Their flight is turned at last in the way of the main pursuer, who, coming closer and closer, swings the lasso quicker, and, at last, it shoots from his hand with a sweep like a snake, and anon a fiery horse is struggling in its coils. The *vaccero* holds on to one end of the lasso, with which he has taken a turn round the high pommel of his saddle; his horse is resisting the jerks of the captive, by leaning over to the opposite side, and so soon as, after the first struggle, the lasso slackens, the rider spurs his horse, which, bounding forward, drags along the other, weakened under the throttling pressure of the noose.

At times, horses that are destined to be caught are driven in a body into a *corral* (a staked-off inclosure), where they are then lassoed. Cattle, and particularly bulls of doubtful temper, come under the operation of two lassos. The first *vaccero* throws the lasso over the horns, and avoids, by cunning curves and occasional jerks, the attacks of the bull. The second *vaccero* keeps behind the bull, and watches the opportunity, when, in running, its hind feet are off the ground; instanta-

neously he slips the noose underneath one hoof, and jerks it up: one hind foot is thus caught, and now the bull has no chance to advance or turn where it is not desired he should go. Checked by the horns and checked by the hind foot, he gets at last into an irregular pace, and stumbles, very much against his will, into the corral, where he is tied to trees or posts.

In the lassoing of bulls, the lasso is generally not tied to the pommel, as at times bulls may prove Tartars, and run away with both horse and rider; or, worse, entangle them in the lasso and kill them. Some bold *vacceros*, when bent on catching some desperate bull, perhaps of peculiar swiftness, *tie* the lasso to the pommel, and that is called, *amarrado a muerte* (bound to death). A turn round the pommel answers all common purposes; and, if the bull prove too strong, they let go the end and escape. The lasso seldom breaks, as it is made either of hide or strongly-twisted horsehair.

Early on the following day, we started. The new companion of our horses had passed a piteous night amongst them, as he had received, like many an intruder before him, a good kicking. In this case it was certainly highly unjust in our horses to use

him so, as the poor fellow came to lighten their burthens, and share occasionally in all their duties. Although our saddle-bags, containing only a few shirts and a decent suit, were light; yet, without them, our horses went better, as every horse will, on a long journey; for the story of the straw and the camel's back is no fable.

The road that day was more pleasant than that of the day before. There was no dust, as it was merely a trail over the green sward of a black soil. Enclosed maize-fields of great extent were everywhere visible, and herds of cattle were straying in all directions. In the beginning of the afternoon, we came to El Valle, ten leagues from San Felipe. This cattle estate belonged to the Governor of Durango, General Heredia, a staunch adherent of Santa Anna. These distinctions seem to have had little weight with the Indians, who, a few days before our arrival, had been there and amused themselves in lancing his sheep, killing about two thousand of them. Horses and horned cattle had been saved in time, by driving them within the circumvallations of the fortified main buildings.

This *hacienda* was said to contain ten thousand head of cattle,—nothing extraordinary in a country where there were formerly owners of thirty, fifty,

and a hundred thousand head. The immense extent of private property in real estate, as well as the excellent pasture on them, are the cause of such riches. It is common to travel all day in the limits of one *hacienda*, and Von W—— told me that, on the road from Monterey to Durango, he had once travelled three days before he had passed the boundary of one large *hacienda*.

On the next day, the 22nd of December, we departed, as usual, at the earliest hour; a good method everywhere, but particularly so where a few hours, more or less, in a scorching sun, make a great difference on man and beast.

The plains of the past days were now turning into valleys, hemmed in more nearly by the enclosing mountain chains; the lively green sward gave way to a rocky and sandy soil; little scrubs of a dull green straggled over grey stones; at the base of lead-coloured hills, were scattered huge and bleak fragments of granite, misshapen and sullen in appearance. Not an animal was to be seen, no sound of life vibrated through an atmosphere, clear and dazzling, yet void of all mellowing warmth. There was something oppressive to the mind in the frigid aspect of this barren solitude, so unlike the majestic effect of Nature's

solitudes elsewhere. Here, her very pulsation seemed petrified, life seemed to have fled in horror from the Gorgonic features of this rocky surface; one felt as if wandering between the bleak walls of a haunted house, where even the screech of the owl no longer echoes.

In the long narrow perspective of this valley, an indistinct object, elevated over the maze of brush-wood, looking like something of man's handiwork, came now in view. It looked like a cross of unusual height, but, on the whole, of a strange appearance. As we came nearer, something like a body seemed attached to the cross; we spurred our horses, and in reality it proved to be a human body. It was an object quite in harmony with the scenery. On high, the half-naked form of a man, tied firmly by the neck to a beam, hung suspended. The skin was that of a brown man, now glassy and transparent, like parchment; the face hung down, hidden by a shock of black hair, coarse and bristly. A mouldy paper was attached to the foot of the beam, on which a few half-effaced words spoke of justice having overtaken the mis-doer, guilty of many murders committed on this spot. This horrible object excited no wonder in us at the time; it seemed so in accordance with

the place, to come upon the footsteps of the demon that haunted it, and of which we now contemplated its ghastly *larva*. No signs of corruption were perceptible. Was this owing to previous preparation, or to the peculiar quality of the atmosphere, at some distance from the ground? But, strangest of all, no vulture had come to the feast; their ever-ready beaks had spared this solitary monument of Mexican justice; or had even they felt a loathing at the poisonous flesh of the murderer?

We had soon enough of the spectacle, and trotted away at a brisk pace. We reflected that, among so many crosses erected over victims, this was the first mark of retribution we had seen in Mexico, a country where every traveller is obliged to pay for a licence to carry arms, which are enumerated in the indispensable passport. Besides, there exists a law, that every foreigner wishing to reside, for some time, in a town, has to pay for a *carta de seguridad*, which sounds rather curious in states like Durango, Zacateccas, and Chihuahua: thanks to the premature enfranchisement of their slavish population!

At noon, we reached a solitary *hacienda* of ruinous buildings, where a few ragged inhabitants

eyed us rather suspiciously. If they took us for "gentlemen of the road," we requited the suspicion by thinking not much better of them, and looked sharply to our horses and saddle-bags, — a necessary precaution everywhere in Mexico. A slight repast for us and our horses was soon despatched, and, to the astonishment of the inhabitants, we paid for it and departed.

The road, in the afternoon, became more steep, rugged, and stony, altogether a trying road for the hoofs of our horses, to which it is necessary to pay much attention, as sharp fragments of stone will get jammed in the concavity of the shoe, and are removed only with difficulty. Towards evening, we approached the town of Sombrerete, twelve leagues from El Valle.

Formerly this town had been one of the most flourishing communities of miners in the North. Now, more than half of the town is in ruins. The situation and aspect, from a distance, were picturesque. The mountains, though barren and bald, like those of the morning, were more majestic in outline, more varied by chasms and ravines; the houses seemed to totter on the brinks of precipices, and the dark mouths of mining shafts were yawning from every hill, around which arose gi-

gantic heaps of mineral dross, black and rusty, having yielded already its millions of wealth to ambitious humanity. A few mines were still worked, and the dense smoke of their furnaces hung over the streets of the towns, or curled lazily up to the hill tops, where the last glow of the day was fading into coldness and darkness.

In the main street, a wretched little *meson* gave us shelter and food; and, after providing amply for our four-footed companions, we sallied forth to saunter about the streets.

A number of fine buildings in the main street are kept in perfect condition, and show to advantage amongst the ruinous remainder of the town. They are mostly of two stories, and have arched colonnades in the lower one. Stores generally occupy the latter, and were now brightly illuminated, as it was evening; a time in which considerable sales are made in Mexico. A busy crowd was moving through the alternate light and shade of the colonnades, where, here and there, the families of some merchants were seated before their doors, in repose, and *en toilette*. The market square was also illuminated, according to another general custom, and presented an animated little scene, with its tables of refreshments and other wares, its pine-

torches flickering over groups of both sexes, stationary or wandering in a glare of light, or through streaks of darkness. Fruits were exposed abundantly for sale, particularly fine water-melons, the prickly pear, peaches, and apples. A few guitars sounded through the hum and laughter of promenaders, and a few distant voices vibrated in some national song of a minor key.

A sudden peal from the bells of a lofty church tower hushed, in a moment, the sounds of amusement; from the opened portals of the church streamed a flood of light and harmony, and a procession, resplendent with a hundred torches, and chanting and swelling the chorus of a hymn, sallied forth. The multitude on the *plaza* sank on their knees. The dazzling train moved onward toward the main street, swelling in number as they proceeded, men and women following the stream of light as it gradually penetrated the sombre perspective of the long street. At the door of every house its inhabitants were placed on their knees, and they joined with their voices in the alternate responses and singing. At particular houses, the procession stopped and a short service was read, while the pitiful glare of the torches danced over the rich attire of priests and the sombre figures of

men and veiled women, bending their heads to the ground. We followed the procession for some time, and had occasion to observe how little true religious fervour had to do with some of the pilgrims, who seemed to think their personal attendance a sufficiently meritorious work, without their restraining thoughts of flirtation, even under the shade of the cross.

The next day, the 23rd, our journey was a long one; fifteen leagues over a stony road, to the little town of Zaenz, situated in a deep rent of the high plateau of Northern Mexico. Our horses did their duty well; as on the past days, we had rather to restrain their ardour than otherwise. That evening they had gone over 57 leagues, or 171 miles, in five days, without a touch of the spur. Such a result can be attained only by the utmost care in saddling and feeding. In the former, particularly with Mexican saddles, the saddlecloth has to be kept as dry and clean as possible; the girthing has to be tight in mounting, and, after an hour's riding, retightened, as the least moving of the saddle is the first cause of a sore back. In stabling and feeding, it is necessary to choose a stable that may be locked at night, if possible, or to see that the greater part of the grain-feeding is done during the

day, as the Indian corn is often stolen from the manger, particularly when many travellers and mule-drivers are lodging in the same *meson*. This we experienced after starting from Zaenz. We saw, by the pace of our horses, that they had not fed well, although they had received ample and good materials for their supper. I determined that this should be the last time of such a thing happening.

The road this day was a perfect sea of pebbles and fragments of stone, which makes trotting very inconvenient to horses not born on such soil. My *schimmel* was here at home, and showed his acquaintance with such roads, by sending, ostrich-like, perfect volleys of stones against the horses of my companions, that were tripping in the rear. I had to exchange places with them, as the thing became annoying and dangerous. The soil was, in some places, sandy, the road pretty level, and over an extensive plateau, where large maize-fields stretched in all directions; solitary hills rose abruptly from the level, here and there, and on the horizon before us, towards the south, seemed piled, terrace upon terrace of mountains. In the afternoon we reached Rancho Grande.

This is a considerable *hacienda*, both agricul-

tural and for pasture. We were glad to see our poor horses, when stabled, indemnifying themselves for the injury done them the previous night, as they stood tearing away at green maize-straw, shaking their heads up and down with it, and blowing and snorting in their ardour of consumption. The present stable, like the former, was without the means of security. I saw also that some hungry mules were wistfully peering, with their long erected ears, across a partition. I thought their masters might, perhaps, take compassion on them, to the cost of our horses; so, when it was dark, and everybody had retired to his room, I sallied slily, enveloped in my *serape*, with my sword under it, and went to the stable of our horses. There it was rather dark; but the horses recognised me, and I passed between them and lay down, underneath the manger. For some time no sound, but the crunching of our horses at their corn, was audible. After about an hour, I saw a dark figure appearing at the entrance of the stable. A sly whistling, and other means, were used to assure the horses, which commenced to snort and stamp and tear at their halters. Somehow, the person succeeded in quieting them, and he insinuated himself between them and the manger.

Here he took off his *serape*, and commenced, very complacently, scraping the corn together. I rose slowly, measured with a look the sweep of my sword, and discharged a flat stroke across his shoulders, that made him bound upwards like a piece of India rubber. He yelled and roared, *El diabolo, ave Maria!* the horses commenced kicking and plunging, while I completed the good round dozen for the intruder, who, rolling too near the hind feet of my *schimmel*, was sent flying into the middle of the courtyard by one of his kicks. When I ran to see whether he was badly injured, he had disappeared. I knew Mexico too well ever to think of pursuing the inquiry further, and contented myself, so far, with this little revenge and the frustration of theft. Without saying anything on the matter, we saddled early for departure. The room door of one of the travellers was yet shut, at a time when all the others were open; we supposed, therefore, that it contained the delinquent; so I took his *serape*, that he had left in the manger, cut it in two, and festooned it gracefully on each side of his door.

That day's journey was ten leagues to the town of Fresnillo. The country was similar in appearance to that of the past day, only more sandy and less

stony. Shortly after starting, Von W—— related to us an adventure of his that took place on this same road, two years previously. He had come from the United States by way of Monterey and Durango, and was travelling towards Zacateccas. After the primitive manners of the Americans, the politeness of the Mexicans made them appear to him a charming people. He took all accounts of robbers for exaggerated, and thought that politeness and a show of firmness would be all that was needed in any emergency. He travelled, therefore, from Durango, alone and unarmed.

In Rancho Grande, by some accident, his well-filled purse became visible to a crowd of loungers round a store. Soon after he departed thence. Having ridden about two leagues, he observed two riders coming behind him. They were well mounted, and soon came up with him. Every Mexican is polite to strangers, even on the road, so he found it nothing strange that, after a salutation, they entered into conversation with him. They lauded his horse and general appearance, a kind of flattery every Mexican knows how to administer, very cunningly. They animated their horses, and his horse getting into the same spirit they were soon galloping and laughing, like good-

hearted, jovial fellows. By-and-by, they said they would like very much to have good pistols, and would be glad to buy them, the road being at times not safe, and a lasso and a knife not so efficient. He prudently avoided any direct answer, although no suspicion had yet entered his mind. They could see that he had no holsters on his saddle, but he might have pistols under his *serape*, in his belt. All this time, the horses kept up a short, prancing gallop, and the false wind displayed, at last, his belt void of all murderous instruments. Shortly afterwards, the gentlemen commenced talking about lassoing in general; and, in illustration thereof, began coiling up their lassos in their bridle hands, while their right hands were playing with the nooses. Now the thought first crossed Von W——'s mind—if these fellows should begin practising on him, he would have a small chance of resistance. Their horses were superior to his, and he without even a penknife. He excused himself from riding so fast, and thought of dropping behind them; but they good-naturedly regulated their pace by his, and continued playing with their ugly nooses.

Von W—— now became desperate, and thought of trying an escape. On a sudden, he spurred his

horse, and for a moment passed them; but now they threw aside all disguise, and, swinging their lassos round their heads, went after him. In an instant he felt a jerk and shock, and was rolling in the dust. The lasso had caught him over his arms and was held tight by one of the robbers; the other leisurely dismounted, and, with an unpropitious grin, unsheathed a large knife and walked up to the captive. Von W—— sprang up, and with some kicks kept the knife at a distance. He was jerked down again, and the fellows halloed to him to give up his money. That he would not do, but, lying on the ground, still kept the approaching rifler at a distance with frantic kicks. The man with the knife then investigated the saddle-bags on Mr. W——'s horse, that was quietly witnessing the scene, and taking an occasional bite at some stray tuft of grass. The robber found only clothes and a little silver, replaced the former, put the latter in his pocket, and remounted his horse. He and his fellow then held a whispered conversation, at the end of which Mr. W—— was dragged, rather unceremoniously, from the road towards a little thicket, not very distant. He began to reflect whether the thing would not become now too serious for longer resistance; the sun also was just beginning to sink, the time for

help from passengers on the road long past, and the fellows seemed tired of asking questions uselessly. Arrived at the thicket, the man who had first dismounted took the lasso in hand, and the other came now with drawn knife to put the last penal question. Mr. W—— said to us: "I looked into the fellow's face, and he appeared no dabbler or new hand at this business: one moment of longer denial to him would have been fatal to me, so, with a deep sigh, I assented; and while two knives, one before my eye and another over my back, gave bail for my good behaviour, I handed out my purse. The fellow before me snatched it from my hand, jumped on his horse, and, the other doing the same, away they flew towards Rancho Grande. My horse had waited for me on the road, I mounted it, and rode, with a heavy heart and sore bones, to Fresnillo, where I lodged an ineffectual complaint."

We sympathised with him for his past misfortune, and, as he pointed out the spot to us, we ardently wished for a reappearance of the other performers on this scene; but, unfortunately, it remained but a wish.

That day there was a good deal of travel on the road. Long trains of covered waggons with six, eight, or twelve mules, laden with merchandise or

produce, were going and coming from Fresnillo and Zacateccas. By their side trotted armed men or soldiers, giving quite a martial and picturesque appearance to the peaceful calling of the teamsters.

When camping at night in the outskirts of towns or villages, these teamsters form their waggons into a quadrangular bulwark, and keep vigilant guard at the entrances to it; for the risk of attacks from Indians continues up to the very gates of Zacateccas, and the national plague of highwaymen is spread all over Mexico, more or less. Families travel also in large waggons, the males among them sitting as much as possible in front and on the sides, armed to the teeth.

At a sharp turn in the road, we came suddenly upon one of these vehicles, in which four gentlemen honoured us by cocking their double barrels, which were lying ready for use on their laps. We acknowledged the compliment by a rather ill-bred shout of laughter, and bowed to the ladies. Now and then, a solitary *arriero* would pass with a few mules; but this is not the region where this worthy tribe of men flourishes.

The broad plateau that stretches from the north of Durango, beyond the capital of Mexico, offers scarcely any obstacles to waggon-roads, in all

directions; animals of draught exist in abundance; hence commerce can thrive, as it did under the Spanish dominion. But the mountain terraces, that gradually elevate this plateau from the east and west, are abrupt and precipitous; rents and chasms of the wildest aspect traverse and intersect the mountain chains in all directions, and the engineer, unaffected by the luxuriant beauties of tropical vegetation, and, after cursing atrociously the picturesque outline of hill and vale, stands lost in despair on the brink of their intractable precipices, over which he has to construct a road. Here, where nature is grandest, the *arriero* thrives: indefatigable, like his mules, he climbs up the rugged paths after the long train of hundreds of burdened quadrupeds, winding along the zigzag way in straggling procession, with tinkling of bells and the encouraging shouts of himself and his fellows. Such is the ascent from both coasts. To these difficulties are joined the depressing influence of the tropical climate on human energy, from which the tribe of *arrieros* alone seems exempt. As regards the prosperity of the two coasts and the interior, the difference is strikingly in favour of the latter, a result of the foremention ed causes.

Early in the afternoon we reached Fresnillo, ten leagues from Rancho Grande. This little town is the offspring of mining business in its neighbourhood. Even in the present distracted times, it showed a good deal of activity, as one of the largest mines is still in operation. The smelting-houses and other offices of this mine are situated on the north-east side of the town. They are surrounded by an immense circumvallation of brick walls, with loopholes and towers for defence. Each side of its square is at least a thousand yards long, and gives an idea of the extensive means that are at work in the establishment of this mine. A little to the east from it, we saw a new building, intended for an academy of mining, which was nearly finished. The size was not imposing, but the style seemed pleasing: a Grecian peristyle, in the projecting centre, rested upon a well-proportioned base of steps, leading to the entrance hall, where niches awaited the productions of the sculptor's chisel. I have no knowledge of the scientific principles of architecture, but, on the whole, the building seemed a very creditable work for modern Mexico. I believe the fund for its construction is mainly supplied by contributions from owners of the northern mines of Mexico.

It was on Christmas day that we arrived in this town: music, fireworks, and gay parties in the streets celebrated the festival. The bells were ringing merrily, but they found only a sad echo in our hearts, that vibrated in a sigh for home. Christmas bells heard on a strange soil are but melancholy chimes.

On the 26th we started for Zacateccas, twelve leagues from Fresnillo. The road, in the first part of the day, was excellent, level, smooth, and hard, with consequently little dust, and our horses went over it with joyous alacrity. There is a charm in being mounted on an animal of spirit, that, on your slightest indication of impatience at distance, bounds forward with you; you feel as if the strength of the horse were your own, a feeling of irresistibility buoys up the heart, a spirit that urges the traveller over space and craggy mountains and makes the soldier charge the bristling walls of the bayonets of a square.

In the beginning of the afternoon we began ascending the mountains that rise in the neighbourhood of Zacateccas. On various turns of the zigzag road we had extensive views of the endless plateau to the north, bordered by blue and airy mountain tops. Towards the west they approached

nearer, and joined their sloping sides to the terraces which we ascended. There, objects became more distinct by the help of the Doctor's spy-glass.

The Doctor had just been looking intently on one spot, when he handed the glass to me, and, with a significant smile, desired me to look in the same direction. I did so. Along the base of the half-obscured side of a large hill, a dark line seemed moving slowly. It appeared like an immensely long reptile, creeping steadily through the mountain shadow. 'The head passed now into a space of bright sunlight, that began to glitter on spear-tops, and to play round the active figures of horsemen, as they scrambled up a rather steep road. The whole cavalcade entered by degrees into the light, and packhorses with baggage, women and children, between spearmen on prancing horses, became fully visible.

I lowered the glass, and the Doctor's eye met mine; I gave him an assenting nod, and communicated to Mr. W——; "There they are!"

"Who?"

"The Indians." He had been formerly a great admirer of the "Last of the Mohicans," but lately his esteem for the Indian character had undergone a change, in which the Doctor and I sympathised

most heartily; therefore the prospect of a proximate *tête à tête* with them did not lead us into any extravagance of rejoicing. I raised the glass again, and watched the progress of the train, as it was approaching a yet distant part of the road, where it divided, one part leading in a direction to intersect the one we were on, and the other diverging towards the west. There were at least two hundred fighting men in that cavalcade, and so no time was to be lost, in case they should have any intention to come our way; for even the waiting to see their decision would cut off our chance of progress on the road.

With a firm pressure on the flanks of our horses we started them, at the longest stretch of their trot, and caught occasional glimpses of the cavalcade, going still parallel with our route, whenever some intervening hills would allow their road to become visible. We increased our pace, but it seemed the Indians moved also very fast. As long as the hills hid them, we would think to have passed their latitude, but any new opening would show them still abreast; so, as our horses were beginning to become still more impatient, we let them have their will, and away we went through the whistling air, regardless of ascent or descent. Five minutes after, we galloped up a steep ascent,

just in time to see the Indians turning into the western road.

With a feeling of some relief we watched the dark stream of single-filed horsemen receding towards the distant mountains, and becoming soon indistinct on some dusky mountain slopes. After breathing our horses a little, we congratulated ourselves on having seen, at the cost of a little gallop only, that the Indians are no myth.

We had just turned our horses' heads to the road, when Von W—— exclaimed, "There they are again!" Right before us, about three hundred yards off, a troop of horsemen galloped down a hill; but a second glance showed our mistake: they were Mexican lancers. A motley band of mounted yeomen, on duty as "*patriotas*," a kind of national guard, now came upon us with an officer at their head. "*Passaporte!*" halloed the valiant patriot, and he might have added, "or your life," for he looked sufficiently fierce and ragged. I gave the Doctor a wink to look closely to the movements of this gent, and dismounting went to the packhorse, which I had led by the halter, and produced our passports. He pored long over their contents, while profound wisdom irradiated from every lineament of a pock-marked face. Finding himself at

last disappointed in detecting flaws, he handed them back with a magnanimous sweep of his hand, and told us never to forget all that travellers owed to the fatherly care of the Mexican Government. Such good advice could not go unrewarded, so I gratefully told him of the proximity of the Indians. I am sorry to say this communication seemed to have a damping effect on his spirits. He became suddenly very civil, asked me a few questions about the direction they had taken, and departed in the very opposite one, most likely, of course, to circumvent them and cut off their retreat!

It was night when we descended into the rugged chasm in which Zacateccas is situated, and, after some wandering about in the crooked and narrow streets, we found at last a *meson*, where we stopped. Over a bottle of very passable wine, we passed the evening after supper, chatting about our past adventures and escapades, and voted a stay of two days in Zacateccas, to give some rest to our horses, and stretch our shanks a little by walking.

After a delicious slumber, we rose early in the morning, had a bath, and donned our spare suits. On our arrival, I had discovered something like the sign of a French *restaurateur*, towards which we bent our steps. After threading for some time a

labyrinth of narrow streets, we hailed at last the propitious signboard. A real *garçon* made us immediately at home, behind a long *table à diner*, spread with a white and shining table-cloth; a steaming omelette, flanked with real Bordeaux, appeared, and at it we went, relaxing the past paroxysm of admiration for the beauties of nature in a goodly indulgence of the artificial enjoyments of civilisation. To complete the delusion of a European *fata morgana*, a middle-aged gentleman, French to the backbone, arrived for his breakfast, and we were soon engaged in an animated cross-fire of recent politics, and other nick-nacks, during the pleasant task of providing for the inner man. When we sallied, we felt that the proprietor of the signboard had fulfilled his promise; we were completely restored, and felt perfectly equal to the most hazardous enterprises. We bottled up our ardour, however, for future emergencies, and contented ourselves for the present with a ramble about the town.

The houses and streets of Zacatecas are crammed in between the clefts of ravines and rocks. There is scarcely anywhere a longer perspective than perhaps two hundred yards before you. The streets rise and fall as if you were on a

PLAZA OF ZACATECCAS.

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road of the Rocky mountains; only a very small allowance of sky is visible, as, on every hand, the gigantic sides of the great chasm rise into the clouds. Most of the houses are well built, and two-storied; but you see that means were more plentiful than room for their construction. A few edifices have more elbow-room, and look stately and indicative of their owners' wealth. The *plaza* is an inclined plane of rather contracted dimensions, through which it is difficult to navigate your way, without stepping into heaps of eggs, oranges, or earthenware, or, worse, falling into the lap of some old, weather-beaten applewoman. The cathedral is a noble building; it faces the *plaza* with one side, and a narrow street with its entrance. Of two lofty towers, one seems to attempt to get a view beyond the narrow mountain basin; the other, not being finished at the time of "Independencia," has remained ever since, waiting for a chance of following his companion to the same elevation. The effect of this noble structure is marred through the want of space around it; a disproportion very frequent in Mexico, as well as the reverse, where an immense space round a large building makes it appear unimposing. In Durango, the cathedral made in that respect a worthy exception.

The interior of the cathedral was gorgeous in the extreme; silver and gold, massive and plated, were everywhere displayed. The plan of the nave was grand, but too much frippery, heaped on heaps, checked all majestic impression. Right above the towers of the cathedral is a peak on which a church is perched, appearing like a white dove overlooking the labyrinth of streets. To the right from it are some barracks, fortified, and in a commanding position. Mining establishments line the sides of the basin, where they are wedged into crevices, apparently suspended over the roofs of the town. Bodies of active labourers swarm in and out of them like ants. An attempt has been made to form an *Alameda*, but the space is like the platform of a prison, and the trees look sickly. Here and there we caught some glimpses of the *beau monde*; but there was no regular turn-out in the two days we remained. A few sylphs, shading, provokingly, laughing eyes, passed us in the evening, on the illuminated *plaza* and market; but that was all we saw of female beauty.

On the 29th we started again. Our road followed for some time the bottom of the chasm, that gradually widened. Fresh vegetation and gardens

began to line the road on both sides, and charming houses rose amid their bowers. In fact, the beauties of Zacateccas lie outside of it, and follow the road nearly for two leagues. That day's journey was a long one, sixteen leagues to San Jacinto; but the road was good, and our horses fresh, and we reached it some time in the afternoon. A spacious *meson* did honour to the little village, and our demands of supplies for man and horse were amply complied with. We started next morning before daylight.

The road was excellent, broad, level, and hard; a bracing morning wind stimulated men and horses to vigorous progress. With delight we mutually contemplated our blue noses, that had assumed this hue, as if the north wind of our fatherland had come to look after his sons in Mexico. There is a luxury in such shivering recollections, somewhat ice-bearish, but highly patriotic. The rising sun soon thawed our ice and snow *phantasmas*, and the aurora borealis faded from our noses.

We arrived at a somewhat elevated part of the road; there we halted for a moment to tighten our saddlegirths, and adjust the little load on the packhorse. No traveller had as yet passed us. When we first dismounted, we had seen a little knot of

persons halting in the road ahead; and, when we remounted, they seemed to be yet on the same spot. I began to wonder what they were doing, so I took the spyglass and reconnoitred. They appeared to be about ten or twelve horsemen engaged in conversation, and despatching some eatables; some were dismounted, arranging their riding gear, and some, lolling on their saddles, smoked their cigaritos. It seemed to me an ill-chosen place for a picnic, and they did not seem to be *patriotas* on duty, as the red and green flag was wanting on the lances that two or three of them carried. Travellers would not stop at such an hour, in such a place, to eat, so there was something suspicious in the whole affair.

On roads, where the ruling principle is to consider everybody as a robber, without any grounds for such suspicion, the faintest probability of such an imputation being just becomes a powerful hint. The Mexican robber, like the modern sharper of Europe, may wear the guise of a gentleman, as his trade is thriving, and, by the time you find out his true character, you are already suffering from it. We reflected, therefore, what was to be done. The party was more than thrice the number of ours, and seemed well armed. To circumvent them,

from where we were, was impossible, as the road was lined with stone fences, and the only intersecting lanes were commanded by them. Return we would not, so we resolved to break through.

The undertaking was not so hazardous as it may seem at first sight. The Mexican robber never expects much resistance. An old Mexican traveller once said to me, in the way of advice, "Indians are bad, but robbers are not dangerous; for if you give them what you have, without much ceremony, they don't even beat you!" However laudable we might think such moderation, we were not now in the humour to give anything to anybody. I counselled my friends that we should ride onward, as if unconscious of the party's intentions; that they would see we were foreigners and most likely think us "verdant;" that they should let me have the first shot, when I should think it necessary; that I would ride foremost; Von W—— should lead the pack-horse, and the Doctor be behind the latter, ready to prick it into a gallop. It appeared that the Mexicans had not as yet noticed us, as the distance was considerable and a turn of the stone fences had half-hidden us.

We mounted and rode forward, in common travelling pace. I had taken a pistol from the

holsters, its large ball being more to be depended upon than the smaller revolver ball; and, as much depends on the effect of the first shot, I held the pistol carelessly behind my thigh, which sheltered it from being seen; hat, cravat, and seat were adjusted in the freshest European style, and I began to admire intensely the lovely scenery of glorious Mexico. Very soon the party ahead saw us: in a minute they were all mounted, and two or three of them entered the intersecting lanes on both sides; the rest halting in the middle of the road. Their intentions were no longer to be mistaken. Arrived at about fifty paces from them, one of them, who seemed by his rich Mexican costume to be their captain, shouted: "Apeanse, cavalleros" ("Dismount, gentlemen"). I paid no attention to this greeting, and gave him a stare as if I did not understand the language. We advanced, in the same even pace, up to about twenty yards, when he shouted a malediction and grasped a pistol in his holsters: instantaneously mine rose, I fired, and he dropped from his horse. I shoved my pistol underneath my thigh, out sabre, and my horse bounded over the robber, who was yet crawling about and shouting to his men. In that instant the Doctor's rifle cracked; a fellow jerked his head back and

dropped, and a pistol shot of Von W—— brought down another. During this time, my horse was stamping upon the captain, who, dagger in hand, tried to disable it. He had evaded two or three thrusts of my sabre, when, suddenly, I felt a painful blow striking the inside of my foot, behind the stirrups; but, at the same instant, my sword passed through him. I stooped over the neck of my horse and charged through two or three dismayed rascals, fumbling with their carabines. Von W—— and the Doctor did the same: the latter, in riding through them, knocked a fellow from the horse with the but-end of his rifle, and away we sped.

All this had passed with the rapidity of thought. The surprise of the scamps at such unexpected energy had been so complete, that, for some minutes, they stood petrified: after a few more, in turning my head, I saw they had commenced the pursuit; but we had gained a good deal of ground, and our horses seemed to outrun the wind. I began to feel somewhat of a sickly sensation rising in my throat, and my boot seemed filled with a warm liquid. I soon saw it was blood, dyeing my *schimmel's* left fore-foot purple. The wound felt to be behind and a little below the ankle, where the captain, missing, most likely, the horse, had stabbed me.

I suppressed the rising in my throat, and managed to keep my seat until we saw a little village, right before us, stretching across the road. Our pursuers then gave up their useless exertions, in which they had fired a few harmless balls, and we entered the village. Here I fainted, and Von W—— caught me in time to prevent me falling from the horse.

In this village, the name of which is San Francisco, we had the pleasure of passing fifteen days, awaiting my recovery. The hæmorrhage had been excessive, and the wound, inflicted with a double-edged dagger, was slow in healing. Thanks to the care of the Doctor, and friend W——, it went on as well as possible. These were fifteen tedious days for us. Fortunately, by some mysterious cause, a few books were found mouldering in the corner of a chamber in our quarters, used for keeping harness and saddles. They were "Les Martires de Chateaubriand," and a few volumes of Don Quixote. With such choice nourishment for the mind, I managed to forget, at intervals, the woes of the body.

After two vain attempts to get up, I succeeded at last in a third, on the 14th January, 1854, and we called for our reckoning. Taking all things

into consideration, the demand of our host was preposterous; but, as neither our temper nor our esteem for Mexicans had gained much by recent occurrences, we did not attempt to argue the matter, but threw him money to double the amount of what he could reasonably demand; and giving him an idea of the nature of our appreciation of him and Mexicans in general, we mounted our horses.

I had borrowed the use of W——'s horse, as mine was not safe to ride, with a lame foot, and we rode, with very little consideration of the frailties of human toes, through a crowd of villagers that had gathered round the parting scene.

A European would wonder at my not having made any report of the attack to the authorities. The *alcalde* visited us, to see our passports, when he heard our story, and vowed vengeance against the malefactors; but the result—if there was any—is unknown to us.

I suffered a great deal from my foot that day, so, after riding a few leagues, we stopped at a cluster of houses, off the road. These were inhabited by *rancheros* with their families. We were most kindly received, as is always the case when the traveller goes to ask hospitality of the real *ranchero*.

This class of people is the most worthy of esteem

of all. Honesty, if honesty can be found anywhere in Mexico, is their peculiar attribute. They are warm-hearted, and of a polish of manners and delicacy of feeling scarcely with a parallel amongst those of their station in Europe. The higher classes in Mexico call them boorish, because their manner is far from cringing; for their way of speaking, as well as of acting, is manly, consequently shocking to those who wish to domineer over them. They are a healthy, good-looking, and athletic race, possessed of great physical courage and natural aptness for any exercise requiring agility, such as the most perfect horsemanship, lassoing, and the use of the sabre and lance.

In Durango I knew personally one who, in a fight with Indians, behaved like a true descendant of Cortes. He was a very powerful man, and always rode horses of proportionate strength. In his rambles after his cattle he used to wear a leathern cuirass and strong leggings, both arrow-proof, and nearly lance-proof. His only weapon was a straight, double-edged sword, with a shell-guard; and on its blade was the old Spanish motto, "Do not draw me without reason, nor sheathe me without honour."* The sword had been handed

* "No me saques sin razon, ni me embainas sin honor."

FIGHT BETWEEN THE RANCHERO AND HIS INDIAN ANTAGONISTS

down to him from his grandfather. The grandson kept true to the motto of the blade. One day he discovered twelve Indians driving off some of his cattle; he immediately rode after them. The Indians seeing one Mexican approaching, whose countrymen they had beaten by hundreds, scarcely paid any attention to him; but, as he came on with drawn sword, they thought it was necessary to punish the presumption.

The pursuit of the cattle was left, and they began riding round their doomed victim, swinging their lances round their heads. But the character of the scene soon changed: my friend, by a few bounds of his horse, was alongside of one of these "man-spitters;" and the first thing the Indian felt was the knock of the sword-shell on his breast, as the long blade was sticking out from his back. The rest came now in a body upon the *ranchero*, and lance-thrusts pressed on him from all sides. But his horse wheeled around as if its hind feet were a pivot, while he, parrying some thrusts and receiving others on his cuirass, lunged out his long blade right and left, and swept it round his head, shivering splinters from their lances. Several began to feel faint from ugly gashes; their shields seemed of not much avail; three sank from their horses,

like the first, to keep him company, breathing no longer through their mouths, but where the Toledo had opened a bloody passage to the lungs. The *ranchero's* horse took as active a part in the combat as his master: urged by him in bounds against the foe, they received many a stunning blow or fractured limb from the pawing fore-hoofs of the powerful charger. The courage of the Indians sank, their enemy seemed invulnerable; his horse bleeding, but not exhausted; and the despised antagonist became now truly terrible. Of the eight that remained, four fled, and were pursued by the *ranchero*.

It was now that a patrol of "defenders of their country" came to his assistance. They had seen part of the *mêlée*, but would not interfere while it was doubtful; but now that the pursuit commenced, they came, like brothers, to share in the dangers and glories of *it*. If these jackasses had attacked the remaining four Indians who were carrying off the bodies of their comrades, they might have secured a considerable reward. Everywhere such an act of courage as this man performed would be lauded, but in Mexico a monument should have been erected.

If all *rancheros* are not like him, it is not their

fault, as the moral atmosphere of towns and larger communities cannot but infect even them. But, as I said before, of all Mexicans they are the most worthy, and by far the most interesting to the traveller, who looks for originality of national character. The wives and daughters of *rancheros* have all the freshness of the wild flower on the airy mountain slope; never overtasked, exposure only tints their beauty more brightly. They are modest and shrinking from the gaze of strangers, but a friendly and respectful deportment soon wins their confidence.

Their blood, although, in many families, strongly mixed with the Indian, which darkens the olive tint on their cheeks, is yet, in many more, found more nearly approaching to purity of Spanish descent than that of persons of their grade in the towns and villages. Their form of body has extreme grace, united with a firm roundness, that speaks of active exercise and sufficiency of good nourishment. Their features are more regular than those of the townspeople, their eyes dark and brilliant; and, in the oval cheeks of some of the younger females, glows a roseate hue, producing altogether a dazzling effect of beauty, felt and duly appreciated instantly by everybody. Above all, their morals

are better; and, if illicit passion lay snares for them, neither that passion nor sordid interest can have any share in their fall: they can be won through the heart only.

Very fair specimens of this race were our hosts of the 14th. The "gudeman" was broad-shouldered and middle-aged, with a face the very picture of good nature; he tendered his hospitality with that polite gravity which had been carried from Old Castile to many a far clime, and may yet be found, less altered than in the mother country, in some out-of-the-way corners, unswept by the storms of change. A fine young man, his son, insisted on attending to our horses, with the interest of a *connoisseur* of them and of an obliging host to us. While rubbing down the horses, he smoked his cigarito; but, when he entered the presence of his father, he neither presumed to smoke nor keep his hat on, like most Mexicans of the towns, nor to sit down even without a permissive look from his father. This respect paid to parents by all their children, even when they have attained full maturity, is another peculiar and charming trait in the character of *rancheros*. In other classes the same may be found, but frequently only as a hollow observance of forms.

In the kitchen, the mother and three grown-up daughters were frying away at something, and rubbing and baking *tortillas*. Now and then, a head would peep cautiously round the door, and a pair of roguish eyes would follow the movements of the white stranger. The voice of the mother would soon recall the curious daughter back to her duty, and the clapping of tortillas, in flattening them between their hands, would go on again. While looking at our horses, as they were consuming some green maize-straw with excessive relish, I heard part of a conversation carried on in the kitchen, to the back of which the manger of our horses was attached. A melodious voice was wondering whether we would eat beans, as across the wide waters such a thing could scarcely be known. A voice, a little less soft, most likely that of the mother, replied that she had been in Zacateccas, fourteen years ago, and an Englishman there had asserted, that in his country beans were plenty, and that she had seen him make a hearty meal of '*frijoles*' (beans). Whether eggs and cheese were known in those countries, she could not say; but we would most likely be used to them already, as we had been travelling some time in Mexico.

The head of the house soon after that announced

the repast being ready, so we went to partake of it. It was a plentiful and cleanly-dished meal; none of the family ate with us; but they all helped us, under the direction of the gudeman, and there was a connecting chain of hands between our table and the kitchen, by which a continual influx of hot *tortillas* arrived on the table. Our attention was divided between the good cheer which a good appetite relished, and the kind cares of our host and his family, in which the graceful figures of the three daughters took a prominent part. Every *tortilla* they put with their slender fingers on the table was accompanied with a long look at those extraordinary beings of *estrangeros*, who were vainly trying to make use of those flat cakes in the way of fork and spoon, in imitation of Mexican custom.

The repast ended, we handed cigars around to all the family, by permission of the patriarch; and, under a cloud of smoke, a conversation of query and answer commenced. The wonders of Europe were, of course, anxiously inquired after; among others, its great men. They had heard of Napoleon, and asked whether his death was a true report. In their unsophisticated minds it seemed scarcely credible that such genius could die at all

and so miserably, and I assured them that, though dead, he was not, nor would ever be, forgotten.

The dusk of evening called for music; the *ranchero* took a wide-bottomed guitar from the wall, tuned it most correctly, and struck a few chords: the three daughters and the son crowded into a corner near the father's chair, and, after some exhortation of the mother, joined in the chorus of the father's song.

It was a song in a minor key, as nearly all Spanish songs in America are. The second part, though chanted low, produced the most just minor chords, that, like the sighs of an Æolian harp, gave a strange charm to their singing. As is generally the case in the country, their voices were not so good as their ears, but their sound had nothing harsh, being well modified by a natural taste for modulation, and having that pleasing natural accord which is generally found in family voices. We also were asked to sing, and we gave them one or two glees of our country. The last chords came out with a strange "pianissimo," for we had recognised the echo that had once vibrated in the walls of our paternal dwellings. We went soon to rest, and felt, even in spite of our home recollections, that for such a day, full of the sunshine of human

kindness, it is well worth while to brave the storms of the Atlantic and the toil of the longest roads.

January 15th, 1854. With daybreak we started, after a hearty leave-taking from our host and his family. With the greatest difficulty we managed to leave some little *souvenirs* with the young ladies, who, along with the whole family, seemed quite dispirited at our hurried departure. It was a cold morning, and we proceeded at a rapid pace, even in spite of smart twinges in my foot. The road was good, the scenery pretty: fresh and verdant meadows and fields were varied with clumps of trees; and, as usual, an horizon of distant mountains was before us.

At about midday, we had accomplished ten leagues, and saw right across our road the town of Aguas Calientes, (warm waters,) an old watering place, peering over thickets and copses of gardens. We entered the town, and soon found a suitable *meson* facing the market square.

So far as I have seen, there is no other town in Mexico, of the same size, that wears such an aspect of thrift and well-being as Aguas Calientes: the streets and buildings are in excellent condition, and the sounds of life hum through them and from the open doors of shops and dwellings. On the market

place, piles of provisions and of fruit of all kinds bespeak an unusual plenty, and prices are very low. Of the particulars of this town I did not see much, my foot obliging me to remain in a horizontal position all day.

On the 16th, our day's journey was twelve leagues to the town of Encarnacion, situated in some rugged ravines, intersecting here the general plateau of the country. Here we had the shoes of our horses inspected, and some of them renovated, by a very passable smith, a personage rarely found in Mexico. Horses born like mine, on a rocky soil, generally have black hoofs of such hardness that no shoes are required. But it is always better to have horses shod, if the road leads over rocky mountains, and smiths can be found there, or that the rider himself carry a few nails and a pair of pincers.

On the 17th, our day's journey was nearly eighteen leagues, to the town of Lagos. There is another town of the name of San Juan de los Lagos, where, annually, the largest fair in Mexico is held; but that one lies a good way to the east, out of the nearest road to the capital. Lagos is situated in a mountainous part of the plateau. The majestic tower of the cathedral rises from the depth of the

gully the town is situated in; other buildings and other towers of tasteful architecture rise, one by one, in view, as the traveller descends from a considerable height, and a dark and shelving mountain-side recedes, which holds the town hidden until one is nearly upon it.

It was near sunset when we were steering our course for quarters. To our annoyance all the *mesons* were occupied by soldiers on the march, and fierce sentinels fiercely repulsed everywhere our attempts at intrusion, a distinguishing trait in the Mexican soldier being, to be terrible in voice, look, and gesture. At last, we got a lodging and stable at a private house. My unfortunate foot impeded much moving about, and so I missed visiting an old Californian acquaintance residing there — a Mexican gentleman of the old and distinguished family of San Roman. I was the more sorry for it, as I wanted to hear some reliable particulars from him of a very curious event, illustrative of the state of society in some parts of Mexico. I must tell it as I have it: —

About two or three years before our arrival, the town of Lagos was suddenly alarmed one day by a troop of about two hundred horsemen dashing into the *plaza*. At first the inhabitants thought that a

"pronunciamento" (a declaration of a change of government by a revolution) was going to take place, as the horsemen looked like "patriotas," and had their officers and bugler. Even while the few soldiers in the barracks were partly disarmed and partly dispersed, this idea prevailed among the townsfolk. But they soon had good reason to see their error. In a few minutes all the streets were secured by a connecting chain of patrols, that extended over the best part of the town like a net, and a systematic plundering of stores and private houses commenced. Now every one saw too late that the town was in the hands of common robbers, who had associated themselves for this enterprise. Their plan succeeded completely; the surprise of the inhabitants paralysed every movement of defence, or even of flight. In the skirmish with the soldiers one highwayman was shot, the only sufferer of their party, and of the soldiers about half a dozen were killed. The pillage lasted until the afternoon, and was conducted with consummate skill, and a moderation in the treatment of men, women and children, which might have served as an example to many a marauding party of soldiers. Towards the end of the afternoon, the

booty was collected, and in order of battle the robbers left the town!

The day before this occurrence, the party had halted, and passed the night at a contiguous village; but they had been taken for troops from some neighbouring province. The day after the pillage, the whole body most likely dispersed in all directions, for no other occurrence spoke of such united numbers again, nor could the Government ever get at even one of the freebooters!

On the 18th, we started for Leon, twelve leagues distant. We crossed a pretty wide river that nearly encircles Lagos, and entered a road shaded by large willow trees, planted along both sides. It was a delightful ride, after so many rides under a burning sun and an atmosphere of dust. For some time the road followed the water, and it seemed that our eyes never could be satiated with the fresh green of the willows and the dark mirror of the waters, over which some pensive willow branches inclined their heads, while their leaves, like waving locks, trailed in the rippling current. Our good humour was somewhat impaired by W—— discovering that one of his pistols was missing. As we had seen them put into the holsters, and as it could not possibly have fallen out, we concluded,

and in all probability justly, that our host had helped himself to it, while he held our horses ready saddled, and we paid our reckoning inside the house.

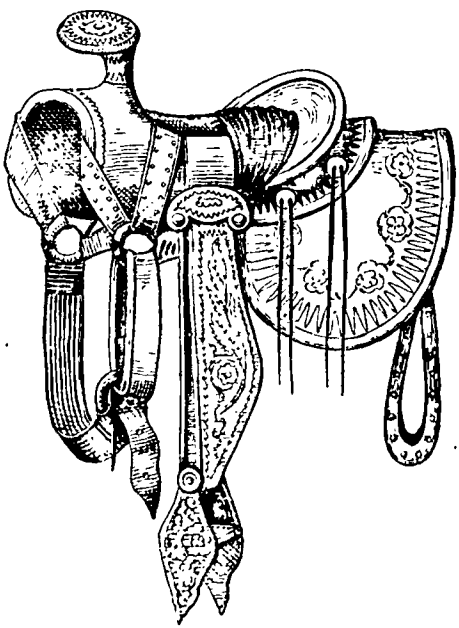
In good time, we arrived in Leon. The town is built on a fertile plain of a large extent. The buildings, large, massive, and on a liberal scale for room, all bespoke wealth, which, if not acquired by the present inhabitants, had at least been kept by them, which is, perhaps, the more difficult achievement of the two in Mexico, where every political change affects the fortunes of private individuals.

Right opposite the cathedral was our *meson*, but how different in structure from those we knew formerly! Four-storied, it reposed on massive colonnades on the outside, and colonnades in the inner courtyard. In respect to the culinary department, the change was not in the same proportion, although a crowded and busy market was right under our windows. Another larger square, planted with trees and furnished with seats and *lamp-posts* (!) seemed to be destined merely for promenading and a few fruit and confectionery venders. Leon is the most famous place for the manufacture of Mexican saddles; they are made there in large quantities, and, at the right shops, of excellent

quality. On the whole, the town pleased us so much, that we resolved to stay another day.

We ransacked most of the saddle shops for a good saddle for W——, and at last got one of excellent model and material. A Mexican saddle has the following advantages:

A firm seat, well back, and never throwing the rider forward; the stirrup leather being very broad



MEXICAN SADDLE.—(SILLA-ESCELETO.)

gives a good hold to knee and calf, which prevents the feet from going too much forward. The girth

can scarcely ever break, all the strain coming on each side upon three broad leather straps, embracing the saddle and uniting in an iron ring; to which, on the left side, another broad strap is fastened for hauling together the girth from the right side, by being passed three times through the ring of the latter, which is, at the same time, a buckle for keeping the required contraction. The broad leather flap over the crupper, called "colapata," is put to the saddle when any saddle-bags or other things are to be carried behind the saddle. The skeleton of the saddle is made of light, tough wood, covered with pigskin. Such a saddle never hurts the horse's back, as its tree is very wide on the forepart and open in the middle, so that there is nothing to touch and chafe the ridge of the horse's backbone.

In the cool of the afternoon, we took our last ramble through the streets of Leon. Our lucky star must have been in the ascendant that day, for, by a chance, we caught a glimpse of one of the rarest masterpieces of Nature—a woman of perfect beauty. It occurred to me at the time, that every traveller acknowledges the grand impression works of art in marble, &c., make upon him, but no expression of enthusiasm is allowed for the beauty of

statues of flesh and blood, which, through the animated combination of colour and form, surpass often all marble wonders of man's imagining. So we thought, at least in this case. We had passed down a lonely street, near the outskirts of the town, where buildings with the impress of stately antiquity seemed to enjoy their solitude and the absence of noisy shops and vulgar crowds; and, in loitering before a shut portal, contemplating the stone carving of its ornaments, our eyes fell upon some white half-curtains, drawn before the lower part of an adjoining window, without impeding entirely a view of the apartment, as the window reached very nearly to the elevated *trottoir* on which we were standing. There, reclining in an arm-chair, sat a female figure of such fascination, that, although feeling all the while a sense of shame at our rudeness, we could not remove our gaze from it. A light, ample robe of dazzling whiteness was draped round a flexible and rounded shape. A majestic head reclined on one arm, which an ample sleeve revealed to be worthy of the wand of Circe: the other held, with taper fingers, an open book. The face, thoughtful and of a clear white, was shaded by black hair twined into two massive tresses. On the cheek lay a deep and long shadow

of black eyelashes, and an intellectual forehead arose above the delicate arches of the eyebrows. The whole cast of the countenance was Grecian, and all the bloom seemed concentrated in the dewy carnation of the lips. So far a statue might have equalled her; there was the same classical repose in position and expression. But in an instant all comparison vanished. A tremble of the eyelash disclosed, slowly dawning, a beam, such as Phidias sighed for when he prayed for the spark of Prometheus; here we felt how worthy of the envious ire of the gods such heavenly fire can be. Two dreamy black eyes shone now full towards us, though seemingly unconscious of our presence. One moment we lingered yet: the next, she rose, like the swan to its wing; and we, returning to consciouness, as the shame of our rudeness became intolerable, hurried past the window. Shortly before dark, I made another pilgrimage to our shrine of beauty, alone. To our mutual amusement, I met friend W—— returning from it, looking quite disappointed, as he had found the shrine empty.

On the 20th of January, we started for Celaya. From Lagos onward, as we progressed towards the capital, there was no mistaking the vicinity of the centre of civilisation, in that country. Roads,

fields, bridges, and buildings were in better condition than in the north of the Republic, and the traffic on the road was considerable; indeed, we met, once or twice, a travelling carriage with a civilised look about it. The road tax —*Peage*— was also more frequently collected, and marching troops, in passable condition, were met with, almost daily. The Doctor having, that day, an attack of fever, we stopped at a large *hacienda* near Silao, to await the passing of the fit.

On the 21st, we reached Celaya, a large and populous town, a little ruinous and dirty, but, on the whole, very creditable for Mexico. A *meson* at the *plaza*, wedged in between two enormously big buildings, bore a sad contrast in construction to the one in Leon; but superior culinary skill made up for this disparity.

On the 22nd, we performed twelve leagues to Queretaro. In the forenoon, the road led still over the even plateau, which had been unbroken from Lagos, and extended from the north of Durango. In the afternoon, the road became strewn with granite fragments, and rugged, and a deep descent opened before our eyes. There was a broad wooded valley at the bottom; and, on the other side of it, arose a precipitous hill, crowned with the white

streets and towers of Queretaro, reflecting the slanting rays of the sinking sun. It took us a long time yet before we crossed the valley, where we again lost sight of the town. At last we ascended the hill-side to the town, and entered its main street just when some lamps, "few and far between," were being lighted.

Next to Mexico, Puebla, Guanajuato, and Guadelajara in the west, Queretaro is considered one of the most important towns of Mexico, and is connected with the capital by an electric telegraph, of which I will speak presently. The town is larger than Celaya, but somewhat in the same condition as regards cleanliness in some of the streets. A mighty cathedral nearly fills a large square; we contemplated it by a misty moonlight that had enticed us from our *meson* late at night, and repaid us by a highly imposing effect on the venerable structure, with its shadowy walls defined, now and then, by glistening outlines, when a clear ray from the veiled moon would touch the sharp edges of the roof, and hang tremblingly on the cornices of the tower.

With daybreak, we started on the 23rd, and descended on the other side of the mountain ridge, on which the town is situated, to a charming valley,

verdant and fertile, and dotted with white farm-houses, amongst inclosures of agave. An immense aqueduct is carried here to the level of the town, on pillars and arches that seem but like cobwebs on looking up from the massive foundations on which they repose in the valley. It is one of the noblest works of Spain's greatest days. The valley, through which this aqueduct leads to the town, is of course higher than that on the side by which we ascended; but, withal, the structure was a grand undertaking, and, to the present generation, must seem the work of a race of giants.

We accomplished that day about ten leagues, and stopped at a *hacienda*, where we intended to buy a new baggage-horse, our first one having become knocked up. We managed to make a bargain, in giving it and a small sum for a spirited little horse.

Early on the 24th we passed the town of San Juan del Rio. The town lies in a bower of fruit-trees and gardens, with an atmosphere of freshness and perfume around it that makes it the prettiest little spot in Mexico. There are many large buildings in it, kept in good condition, and only spoiled by a little extravagant colouring — a very frequent fault in towns near the capital. Here the *diligencia*, or mail coach, passed us, with eight horses

at full gallop, going as far as Queretaro, and from there back to Mexico.

It seems this institution has been set on foot merely to give a certain revenue to the Mexican highwayman, if all accounts be true of the infinite number of robberies committed on it. In the year of our journey, a stagnation in the funds of the distressed highwaymen had taken place through Santa Anna's illiberal practice of hanging a considerable number of them; but these things never last in Mexico, and the purses will be all the heavier, after a short time of recruiting, for the benefit of those who cry, "*Cara en tierra!*" ("Face to the ground;" like the Italians, "*Face en terra!*")

We had to go thirteen leagues yet to Arroyo Zarco; but the road was good, and our horses were in excellent spirits. Following the highway was the line of high posts through which the wire of the electric telegraph runs, and we soon came upon a place where this most mysterious of all wires had snapped, and was humbly lying on the ground, where mules and asses kicked it about in the dust of the road — a striking symbol of the fate of the higher blessings of civilisation amongst a people not yet prepared for them. Such premature innova-

tion can but produce an outward artificial bloom, so long as there is something rotten at the core.

In the afternoon, we got to the *hacienda* of Arroyo Zarco, where a spacious and well-built *meson* gave "good entertainment for man and beast." This was at the same time a station for the mail coach and an office for the electric telegraph. I thought of communicating something new by announcing the condition of the wire to the Government official in charge of the latter; but he coolly answered; "It always breaks, and so we don't bother with it any more, as there is no occasion for it ever since it was used for the first time!"

The 25th saw us in Tepeje, a large and populous town, fourteen leagues from Arroyo Zarco.

On the 26th, we stopped at a *hacienda* about ten leagues from Tepeje, to enter, on the 27th, with daylight, the valley of the capital, six leagues distant from there. It was a Sunday, and a large number of young men were assembled there amusing themselves with various games and drinking the national nectar, "*pulque*." This beverage is the juice of the agave, the American aloe, which collects in the heart of the broad leaves, every morning, and is then of a sweet and mild flavour. In a few hours, a slight fermentation begins, and it

foams like soda water; and, having, at the same time, turned into a pleasant acid, it makes one of the most refreshing drinks on a dusty road. Towards evening, the fermentation of the drink is at its height, and it contains already intoxicating qualities. In this state it is generally put into pig-skins, and kept there by sewing up the mouth.

At daybreak next day, we topped the mountain ridge that borders the valley; and now we strained our eyes, and saw but a dense fog — a pleasant occurrence when one has ridden two hundred and sixty-three leagues to see a sight! We descended to a level road between two broad ditches of water, and dashed impatiently through the fog, to see, at least, the famous town, the sooner. But such impatient proceedings are generally rewarded with a double share of annoyances and obstacles. A loud jingling of bells announced the coming of pack-mules, and an impenetrable phalanx of long ears and bobbing boxes of merchandise began to be visible in the fog. Our position was critical. The drove consisted of at least about a hundred mules, taking up, in deep column, the whole width of the road, leaving but a muddy ditch on each side for the accommodation of other passengers. We shouted, therefore, to the *arrieros* in the rear, to

drive their beasts into files, as is customary and according to law; but, however excellent the general character of the *arriero* may be, the constant association with his mules impairs his tractability in some degree; so their returning shouts were neither complimentary to us, nor productive of any bettering in our situation or humour. The mules in front I had managed to stop first, with the persuasion of a powerful horsewhip, and then their own contradictory spirit prompted them to resist the pressing forward of the rear. The conglomeration of mules' heads and merchandise in bales and boxes, with a litter containing perhaps a lady "*andante*," or an invalid, in the middle of the chaos, became momentarily more dense, and productive of a braying and other noises worthy of the infernal regions. Such was the impenetrable barrier before us, at the sight of which the barometer of our patience commenced falling with an alarming rapidity. I thought of Arnold v. Winkelried's deed at Sempach, of Don Quixote and the *arrieros*, and I resolved to follow their immaculate examples. I charged the weakest mule at a full gallop, knocked it down, and was soon in the middle of the mass, relying entirely on the kicking qualities of my *schimmel* and the redoubtable horsewhip.

With every rearing of my horse some enemy felt its ponderous fore-paws, and the retrograde and sideward movements became general. I do not think the *arrieros* liked this proceeding, for I heard them using very bad language; but we got through, and, as one of them was peculiarly uproarious, he came in for a moderate share of the general distribution of cowhide.

An hour's trotting brought us at last in view of the capital, and Mexico, once swayed by Montezuma, the Mexico to which Cortes had cleft his daring way, lay now before us.

## CHAP. V.

### MEXICO.

A Bird's-eye View. — The Valley. — Its Size detracts from the Grandeur of the Mountains. — The great *Plaza* and grand Cathedral. — The Virgin miraculously preserves her Image. — Loungers, Loafers, Pickpockets, and Spies. — The *Alamedas*, old and new. — Rage for foreign Fashions. — Political Opinions revolve. — "Apotheosis of Iturbide," a Farce. — Comedy wretched, Opera better. — Vandalism of General Scott's Troops. — Miss Antiquities; desire to proceed to those of Mitla. — French Tailors and German Watchmakers. — The Lasses of Mexico. — Raousette and his *Canaille*. — Engage to fight Apaches, and proceed to Sonora. — Invited by Expectation of Wealth, and the Good-luck of a Countryman, they advance and the Indians retreat. — Blanco's Delusion and its Consequence. — Another Expedition of Raousette. — Miscarriage of it, and that of Walker. — We start from Mexico with éclat, by flooring two "Greasers." — Feverish Expectations about Popocatepetl. — Dawning of him and his Mate. — Again he bursts upon our Sight. — Magnificence of the Spectacle. — Strange Tale regarding the Mountain. — Contrivance for Suicide. — Wondrous Discovery, resulting in Gratitude and Wealth. — Puebla, the second City of México. — An ungenial Soil for Foreigners, with some Exception for Teutons.

THERE has been so much written about Mexico, and it has been so ably described, that a detailed repetition would be tedious; I will, therefore, only touch on what may be of fresher interest, in merely giving the impressions produced on me.

Mexico, like other large towns, has the infliction of long, miserable suburbs, which are said to have

been, till lately, the most dangerous part of the road to the capital, as regards robberies of travellers. As one approaches the centre of the town, the houses rise progressively, until one has to jerk back one's neck to look at fifth and sixth stories, with bachelors' garrets on the flat roofs. Rose colour, yellow, Irish green, violent red, even something very much like blue, are used, in fearful devices, to proclaim the various tastes of house owners. To Europeans, these stately buildings, with their balustraded flat roofs, would be more *en ton*, if a little paler in colour. An inevitable "Hôtel de Paris" gave us a room somewhat too much on a level with the summit of Popocatepetl, but otherwise passable; besides affording us a view of the town at all hours of the day, without ascending, which we found a great advantage. Thence, leaning over the granite balustrade, I liked to contemplate Mexico. You saw all that is grand and little of what is small, viz., the pygmies who crawl about in the shade of their forefathers' monuments, as disagreeable mementos of the perishableness of man's grandeur and his pride. Here, around our platform, was the same pure and brilliant atmosphere that made Mexico famous for its climate, ever since its discovery. Here, all the bold aspiring towers could

be compassed at a glance, rising, like so many pyramids, over the plain of flat roofs. Balustrades of different workmanship divided this plain into square fields of various height, often ascending in steps like terraces, adorned with gardens of flower pots and luxuriant creepers, climbing, from the depth of inner court-yards, to be fanned by the breeze around the "*Belvederes.*" At great intervals, these fields in chess-board fashion, these garden terraces, are intersected by the deep channels of human communication, of which the roar ascended but like a faint hum. The suburbs were scarcely visible, or at least their misery was too distant to jar with the general effect. A green arm of the valley being thrust here and there amongst straggling streets attracted the eye from its musings on art to turn and follow the spectacle presented by Nature. Abundance and Peace seem to have intended this valley of Mexico for their favourite seat; the slumbering lake, the joyous green of the sward, shaded here and there with mysterious groves of trees, along with fruitful and waving cornfields, all seem created for the enjoyments of a tranquil life. The majestic mountain chain, wrapped now in folds of mist, with here and there a proud head

marshalling the array of vassals around it, seems stationed there only to guard and watch over the happiness of the valley. There is nowhere an easy approach to it; east and west, north and south, defiant peaks look threatening towards the invader. Such seems to be Nature's intention; but how this very beauty, the very mystery of its strict seclusion, became the cause of the downfall of its happiness, and continues to be fatal to it, every one knows.

The forms of Popocatepetl and his mate were shrouded in mist nearly throughout the ten days we continued our stay in Mexico, and we had only a full view of them on our way to Puebla. I shall refer to them presently. The valley is richly dotted with villas and villages, nestling in bowers of fruit trees and in agave fences and plantations. From the mountain sides, various white lines of aqueducts stretch across the green sward towards the town, some of them of Spanish, and one said to be of Indian origin. On some of the nearest mountain slopes, villages are visible in the dusky hue of their shades at morning, and come out in a little bolder relief in the evening when the sun falls full upon them.

On the whole, the valley of Mexico would be still more imposing, if it were a little less in extent;

for then the grand mountains would look grander still, and all the interesting details on them would be more distinct. For foregrounds in this landscape, a little more of tropical vegetation would give a great relief to the whole view.

Our first rambles about the town were directed towards the *plaza*, where we were told we should find the famous cathedral. At one end of an immense square, this noble structure rises, occupying nearly one side of it. Yet somehow we had imagined that we should receive a more mighty impression from it, than it produced at first sight. This was owing, most likely, to the disproportion of size in the space before it; for however large the building, in the perspective of this extensive square, its gigantic scale appeared reduced. As we approached, this impression vanished, and at last we stood near its mighty tower and looked up, lost in admiration, high as the clouds, to which human skill and ambition seemed to have succeeded in ascending by another Babylonic structure. There is rather a superfluity of stone carving around the main portal, that opens on one of the sides of the nave; but the antique, greyish colour and time-worn surface of the stone harmonises the overcharged design. We entered, and were dazzled

with the gilding and gold, the silver and the lights of the innumerable altars. There was no service performing then, so we could ramble about without impediment. Where there was space between the glittering ornaments of walls, pillars and altars, pictures, sombre and unintelligible, were crowded in, *en masse*. As far as it was possible to examine them, the most of them appeared not out of place in the shade, for quality had kept no pace with quantity in those productions of the brush. In this particular, all ecclesiastical edifices in the New World are sadly deficient, and this deficiency is felt chiefly by persons accustomed to the awe-inspiring masterpieces that throw around the interior of the churches of the continent of Europe such an imposing halo. Two new things attracted our attention: a balustrade of massive silver around one of the choirs, and a large figure of the Virgin, having the appearance of being formed of diamonds, gold, and silver. The greatest wonder wrought here by this saint seemed to us, that she had maintained her position, with so many treasures, in such a precarious locality as the capital; that, apart from the tendency of political commotion to attract such objects, private speculations should not have succeeded in drawing wealth from such a mine of treasures. The reputed

fact is, that several daring attempts at kidnapping this virgin have *miraculously* miscarried; and the certain fact, that at the first appearance of falling in the political barometer of the capital, the saint vanishes to some secret subterraneous region.

One of the long sides of the oblong figure of the *plaza* is entirely taken up with the *Palazio del Gobierno.* It is an immense, high, two-storied building, taking in two entire blocks of buildings behind it, and contains the President's residence, public assembly rooms, and some barracks. It is very simple in plan of architecture and unadorned, but it is not disfigured by paint, and the size is imposing.

A few trees along a *trottoir* before the cathedral, showed a dawning of taste in the later efforts at adorning the *plaza*, and a returning civilisation proclaimed its reign, unmistakably, by a motley crowd of strange cabs and stranger cabmen, ready to convey the exhausted pedestrian to his destination.

On the side of the square opposite the cathedral and the palace are spacious colonnades, under which wares of all kind are exposed for sale, and where a parti-coloured stream of passengers rolls itself, at all hours of the day, through a still denser crowd

of loungers and loafers. Pickpockets and political spies were said to swarm in these colonnades, and the latter of these two off-shoots of the progress of civilisation were said to be in a particularly flourishing condition at the time of our visit, in Santa Anna's reign.

In our more extended rambles about town, we noted some other stately buildings, convents, and churches; but an academy for mining had, especially, a very imposing effect. We also wandered in search of the "Alameda," to see a little of the *beau monde*. At one end of the town, we got to what is called the old Alameda, an enclosed oblong of considerable extent, with shady trees, drives, and walks inside, in the manner of that of Durango. There was also a sort of *restaurant* in the centre, with shaded balconies around it, fountains, stone seats, statues, and flowers, but no life animated this scene; a few black tail coats on some high-trotting Yankee steeds, and one or two misanthropical foot-passengers were all that haunted this "banquet-hall deserted." I was told that this Alameda had gone out of fashion.

The fashionable one lies out of town, and new trees and newer monuments struggle in vain to produce a cheerful appearance. Here the turn-

out on an afternoon was more animated; but one might just as well have looked upon some European street, for all was *à l'Europe*,—horses, carriages, dresses, contrasting, not always pleasantly, with the *teint mexicain*. A few carriages and horses essayed, by splendour of decoration, what they could not accomplish by taste, towards making an impression. The harness and metal-work on the carriages were literally covered with silver, and the horses were a couple of American elephants, worth about two thousand dollars to their owner. In fact, the rage after American horses, since the war, is incredible; not only for carriages, for which they are considered and may be better, in some respects; but also for riding, for which, in my opinion, the Mexican horse is superior, as regards grace and action. There is everywhere visible a madness after assuming the trappings of European society, without caring to imitate its more solid advantages. The people choose to remain Mexicans in learning, in arts, morals, and political and religious customs, and throw aside only their picturesque *serapes*, *calzoneras* (riding trowsers), their wide-brimmed hats; to descend from their curvetting steeds and ascend the top of a high-trotting "Down Eastern" charger; and, to complete the desired metamor-

phosis, they pull a chimney-pot of a hat over their swarthy brows, and squeeze themselves into tail-coats and "Sydenham" or Paris trowsers. If they could see themselves as the European sees them, when they begin aping him, they would remember the fable of some ambitious mice, that, desiring to become birds, turned out only bats,—an animal disowned by both birds and mice.

The *Plaza de Torros*, lying out of town, is still frequented on Sundays, and a good deal of the old Mexican splendour may yet be seen in the performance there. We noted particularly, in one of our visits, two exquisite horses, one white, the other roan, both of Mexican breed, agile as the fawn, and stronger than the massive bull which they dragged singly by the lasso over the arena, as if he had been mounted on wheels. The building is spacious, but of wood.

Between this building and the town, stands the equestrian statue of Carlos Quinto, cast in bronze, and of imposing size. Before the "*Independencia*," it stood on the *plaza* before the cathedral; but, the storm of Liberty having hurled it from its pedestal, it was shuffled into a mean carriage-shed. From there, a repentant generation drew it, and it was permitted to take a position in front of the

town. Such is the course of human opinion, however divergent at first from old maxims and affections; it returns, at last, to the point whence it started. Of this, other examples may be seen, as in the *Place Vendôme*, and in the city of Guatemala, where they were repairing the hacked portrait of Alvarado, the conqueror of Central America.

One evening we devoted to visit the theatre of Santa Anna. The building is of modern but not unpleasing architecture; but its situation, in a street of no great width, and its being wedged in between other buildings, mar the general effect. The interior is spacious, well arranged, and well lighted.

The performance of a silly comedy, by a Spanish company of declaimers, was tedious to excess. No European can have an idea of the class of comedians who infest the few theatres in Spanish America. The commonest mountebanks in Europe play their parts better; and, if declaiming be acting, our schoolboys in that excel them. I never saw anything so unnatural as the acting, nor so coarse as the buffoonery of those pretenders. After the comedy came "the Apotheosis of Iturbide," a farce, as we thought it, until we perceived, by the silence and the awed countenances of those around us,

that it was intended for something very different. This was at the time, it should be recollected, of the reign of Santa Anna, when he indulged in day-dreams of an approaching era of imperial splendour; the example of the President of France combining with the wishes of the ultras of his party to make him believe in the possibility of his dreams and schemes being realised. Toward this event the mind of the public was being gradually prepared by pamphlets, servile newspapers, and exhibitions, all pointing toward the imperial crown about to appear on the Mexican horizon. "The Apotheosis of Iturbide" was a part of this system. It is well known that Iturbide was shot for his ambition, and that Santa Anna barely escaped the same fate for the same crime, some time subsequently.

The opera in Mexico is said to be much superior to the comedy; but it is open only during certain seasons, and the period of our visit was not one of these.

Some distinguished artists appear occasionally in the opera of Mexico; as did Madame Sontag, for instance, after her reappearance in the theatrical world. It was in Mexico that this lovely woman and excellent singer found a grave, from an attack of cholera.

Among my first excursions about town was a visit to Fray Valentine, my old friend, from Durango. The convent of the Carmelites, to which he belonged, is situated nearly out of town, and on somewhat of an elevation. The building is extensive, old, and weather-beaten. I found Fray Valentine in his cosy cell, enjoying the best of health and spirits. I delivered to him all my tender messages, at which he good-humouredly smiled. I dined with him in the *Refectorium*, "*à deux.*" The dinner was excellent, and the wine equally so. He piloted me through the labyrinth of corridors, chapels, staircases, and churches, passing innumerable doors closed on mysterious inmates. Sometimes we mounted dark steps, and passed through long and dark passages. At other times, our way led us past nothing but a series of windows between immense arches. The intricacy of the communicating passages, and the general look of antiquity, remind one of Woodstock Castle and other mysterious structures of the middle ages, peopled with staunch warriors and silent monks. Innumerable oil-paintings covered the walls of the meanest passage. They were of all sizes, but of very little difference in other respects. I saw some traces of recent Vandalism, which Fray Valentine pointed

out to me as souvenirs left by the American soldiers who had been quartered there, when the Capitol was under the command of General Scott: bayonet-thrusts and sabre-cuts that had ripped open large pictures, and were now repaired as well as possible. The best picture—a large altar-piece—was entirely disfigured; all the faces on it being nearly covered by large brown spots, the residuum, no doubt, of pools of American tobacco-juice squirted upon it by two heroes who had made of the altar their bed-place during the whole time of their stay.

Among other traits in my enigmatical friend's character, I was highly amused and pleased at his indignation against Santa Anna for his introduction of the Jesuits into Mexico. There exists an old feud between the Carmelites and the Jesuits, far exceeding in bitterness their hatred against heretics. Jealousy about the division of the spoil may be the main cause; but, for their opponents, even that motive for discord in the enemy's camp is an advantage.

Of Mexican antiquities of the time of Montezuma, I saw scarcely anything; and had to regret particularly the large circular stone said to have on it segments and figures representing the months of

the old Mexican year (a sort of stone almanack), but of which I could not get a sight, as, although everybody I spoke with knew of its existence, no one could tell me of its whereabouts. Besides, we could not prolong our stay, as we were desirous to proceed to the south of Mexico, particularly to Mitla, where portions of its palaces are still extant.

Mexico may be said to contain about as many foreigners as it can afford subsistence for. The greater number are French and Germans; there are but few of either North-Americans or Englishmen. There is scarcely a town in Mexico where a French tailor and a German watchmaker cannot be found; and, in the most out of the way places, some stray Teuton or Frank will turn up, either as shopkeeper, doctor, bootmaker, or *perruquier*. Mexico is really overdosed with them, and they hate one another, from pure envy, more cordially than the Mexicans hate them all. From this rivalry the merchants may be excepted, as they have a greater field for action on fair terms. As a general thing, the Mexican likes the Frenchman best, on first acquaintance; for, say they, "*un Frances tiene educacion*," which means, that every Frenchman can make his bow. But, afterwards, he begins to complain of the Frenchman being "*volatile*," a

quality which a Mexican himself has in the highest degree, but dislikes persons who have the same cast of character, for he suffers from it. Between the Englishman and the German his choice is difficult. He is not blind to the excellent qualities of the former; but his uncompromising straightforwardness often shocks his sensitive nerves, and he generally turns as much affection as he is capable of bestowing on the German, who is milder in judgment than the Englishman, and has often the same sterling qualities. A Yankee he cannot bear, partly, no doubt, on account of the late invasion; but also because, among the mass of such as he sees, he finds neither "*educacion*," as in the Frenchman, nor principle, as in the Englishman. Generally, however, as the safest way to avoid mistakes, he makes up his mind to hate all foreigners, and it takes time before he relaxes this prejudice in favour of individuals.

*Las Mexicanas* (the lasses of Mexico) have a great fame for being "*grdciosas*" in figure as well as in speech — meaning, in the latter case, witty. I was too short a time in their town to form a correct judgment; but, from what I saw, my impression was that there was not much grace of figure to boast of, as their shape looks

awkward with all those stays and other European *mystères de toilette*, which do not harmonise with their generally short figures. A large proportion of them, too, are rather dark in complexion; still, they would look well enough in their graceful national costume, eschewing the feathers of birds of another clime.

Our stay in Mexico extended to about a fortnight, during which time the newspapers were full of the discovery of a terrible conspiracy against the welfare of Mexico. A correspondence between the late Comte de Raousette Boulbon, and some individuals residing in Mexico, was said to have fallen into the hands of the ministry, and to contain a detailed plan for invading Mexico with adventurers from California, and overthrowing the Government.

The facts that transpired regarding Raousette are the following: In 1849, the count arrived in California. In 1850, the Government of the province of Sonora, in Northern Mexico, invited settlers to come to their country, on condition of fighting the Apache Indians, who threatened the welfare, and even the existence, of the few Spanish settlers in the northern part of the province.

As recompense for their services, land for culti-

vation, and a right to mine the "*placers*," of great richness in that territory, were offered to the immigrants. Raousette ratified some treaty to that effect with General Blanco, then governor of Sonora, promising to bring some two hundred Frenchmen, for the purpose.

At that time California swarmed with Frenchmen. Great numbers of the *canaille de Paris*, engaged in the counter-revolution of 1848, had been exported, at the expense of the Government. The lottery of *l'Ingot d'or*, the prizes of which were passages to California, had sent numbers more of the lower classes to San Francisco. All of them, good and bad, still retained some of the heat of the late volcanic eruption of their political relations, and all of them were ready for any enterprise. A great number of them had belonged to the *garde nationale*, and had brought with them all their arms and accoutrements. I have seen a large party of them land in San Francisco, in full uniform, belted, *arme au bras*, and march, *tambour battant*, through its streets to their lodgings.

Among such elements Raousette found no difficulty in recruiting.

Monsieur le Comte was said to be of an ancient family in France; he had not served as a soldier,

but had witnessed a good deal of war in Algiers, *en amateur*, while the Prince de Joinville was there. The excitement of California had drawn him also into its vortex, like many other men of enterprise and romantic spirit, and now, disappointed like thousands, the invitation of the Sonorian Government seemed to offer him a nobler field of action than amongst the Californian gold-digging rowdies. I have often seen the count, in San Francisco, at the *Café Payerot*, in his *serape*, with his *barbe à l'Arabe*, *revolvère et poignard à la ceinture*, talking, as Frenchmen will talk, about his approaching expedition.

After a few months of delay, in negotiations and preparations, the expedition started, and arrived at Guaymas, the harbour of Sonora, in the gulph formed by the peninsula of Lower California and the main land. It consisted of about two hundred Frenchmen, nearly all having smelt powder in some sort of service or another. The inhabitants and the Government officials received them very kindly. They immediately proceeded to the interior, passing Hermosillo, the capital of the province.

The interior of the north of Sonora, where it adjoins Lower California, towards the mouths of

the river Colorado and its tributary the Gila, is, as yet, almost an entire *terra incognita*. A trail, coming from the eastward of Fort Kearny, in the United States, passes through this wilderness of arid plain and mountain; but only large, well-armed parties venture to take this road for California; for they have to pass near the haunts of the Apache Indians.

These Indians are said to be very numerous, very warlike, and exceedingly able-bodied. They are even better riders than the Sonorians and native Californians, — which is saying a good deal for them. They are armed with rifles, are excellent shots, and report says they shoot with silver bullets, having no lead, but abundance of virgin silver in their mountains. The *placers* in those mountains are said to be far richer than those of California; for some, considered by themselves not worth defending, as too near the Spanish settlements, have been found exceedingly rich, as I was assured, in California, by Sonorians who had ventured to work them.

With the expectation of so much wealth before them, the Frenchmen marched boldly on. A late occurrence of a countryman of theirs becoming almost a millionaire, by a daring expedition with

five companions, made their hopes palpable before their eyes. The price at which their countryman became a millionaire never troubled their minds.

Those six Frenchmen, it seems, managed to reach, unperceived by the Indians, the mineral district of the mountains, at a spot where they soon fell in with large quantities of virgin silver. A little river, a tributary of the Gila, I believe, formed the line of their operations. They had a canoe, and the day for departure with their accumulated wealth had been decided on and arrived. The canoe was loaded with as much silver as it could possibly bear; one man remained arranging the cargo, while the five others returned to their camp on a hill, to bring down the baggage.

The one who remained in the boat waited a long time for the return of his friends, but, as they still failed to make their appearance, he suspected that some mischief was brewing. He crept cautiously towards the camp, and arrived just in time to see the last of his comrades struggling in the clutches of the Apaches, as they passed their knives through him and scalped him. The survivor turned on his heels, reached his canoe, and started down the river. The bloodhounds came on his track, and, for a day and a night, he was pursued by them

along the banks, but having no canoe, and the course of the stream being straight and rapid, they failed to cut him off. It may suffice to say, that he managed to bring off his wealth and his scalp in safety to Guaymas, whence he sailed for his own country.

Visions of similar luck cheered the little army under their privations and fatigue: for, to penetrate into the deserts of the interior of Sonora is very difficult, even for an unopposed party, as there are long trails without either water or pasture; and delay from opposition in such tracts might endanger the lives of all. The party advanced to the mineral district without seeing an Indian; but trails and other signs indicated the retreating of bodies of them toward the remoter mountains.

The Indians saw, most likely, the material difference between these new invaders and the former, and would not risk a battle before they had concentrated a sufficient force in an advantageous position for surprise, or before a relaxation in the vigilance of these new comers should give them an advantage. Raousette perceived that he was watched by the Indians, and kept up good discipline and vigilance, proceeding all the while

rapidly forward. At length the far-famed *placers* were reached, and, after a few trials, they proved to be really of great promise.

But an enemy, from an unexpected quarter, appeared in the rear. General Blanco had received due information of all the movements of Raousette, by his spies, who had hovered about the rear of the French. Their easy success had roused his envy. He had prepared his troops from the beginning; had, with them, been following Raousette, at a convenient distance, and now hastened forward to where he had halted. Finding the French in undisputed possession of the *placers*, he displayed his force of double their number, and told Raousette he might now quit the territory.

General Blanco relied so much on the valour of his 400 Sonorians, that he would not enter into any compromise: no, every Frenchman must leave the diggings. And so Raousette decided upon trying the justice of his cause, by combat. In an hour General Blanco and his troops were flying, in inordinate haste, towards Hermosillo. Raousette followed; for he and his men had now to conquer Sonora, or, sooner or later, be murdered or starved between the Indians and Sonorians. General Blanco barricaded himself in Hermosillo. The

French appear, and, at the point of the bayonet, the town is taken, and Blanco and his forces scattered to the winds.

Raousette now held possession of Sonora, by holding fast to its throat, the capital. But the Sonorians commenced against him that most dangerous of all tactics: the golden ass of Philip the First of Macedon was brought to bear upon his forces, for an inevitable delay in his proceedings had produced among them that terrible French malady, *ennui*. Of the *point d'honneur*, the heroes of the last barricades made no very nice point. They had fought in France, they said, to acquire glory; but here money must be the watchword, and Raousette, deserted by his army, had to fly back to California!

When Santa Anna, having superseded Arista as President, commenced putting his army on a better footing, and initiating otherwise his far-reaching plans, Raousette went to Mexico to offer him his services. It seems that no disposition was shown to secure his good-will; therefore, he left Mexico, with the intention, it is supposed, of showing that country what despised talents could do against it. To this referred the rumoured discovery of his correspondence. After our departure, his undertakings ended as follows:—

A new expedition was fitted up in California through the means of a wealthy French merchant of San Francisco, who had aided Raousette already, in his first undertaking; and the plan Raousette had now entered upon, in conjunction with some disaffected Mexicans, was the overthrow of Santa Anna. General Arista was said to be one of the conspirators.

Raousette's expedition arrived at the port of Mazatlan. His Mexican friends came on board, announcing that Mazatlan had declared in his favour. With a few of his French followers, amongst them the merchant, he went ashore, accompanied by his Mexican adherents, to a prepared banquet. On landing, he was arrested by his false allies, put to a short, sham trial, and shot, along with his *armateur*.

This appeared to have been a season in which filibusterism did not thrive; for even Walker, the model filibuster, miscarried, in the same year, in his attempted conquest of Lower California, after he had accomplished it, so far, by surprising in La Paz a guard of twenty-five soldiers, the entire garrison of that place, the capital of the province. Hereupon, he declared the country independent, elected himself President, and was shortly afterwards ejected by

a party of Mexican troops detached for that purpose!

On the 10th of February, we made preparations for starting again; for we had had enough of modern Mexico and its population, amongst the various members of which there were but two of particular interest, the aboriginal Indians who bring to market the various products of their villages, and the Mexican water-carrier, who supplies families with the purest of spring water, and *billets-doux*. I shall speak more at length of the former when we come to their villages, where they are seen to best advantage. Meantime, I must not forget one special solace to which we had long been strangers: viz., excellent ale, brewed by a countryman of ours, and of which we made the most, in refreshing our German souls; our horses, also, had revelled in repose and the fat of the land, and their warlike neighing, on our entering their stables seemed to announce their readiness for another campaign.

On the 11th, we made our start. It was accelerated by one of those little accidents which happen frequently to foreigners in Mexico. In those streets through which the vehicles have occasion to pass, carrying the *Espiritu Santo* to the sick, all

passengers, on foot, on horse, or in carriage, are obliged to kneel until the procession passes. On my first visiting Spanish countries, such occasions were generally productive of some obstreperous scene, caused by my aversion to genuflexion in public. But, on having seen more of that world, I reflected that, as in the East, when a Christian goes to a Mussulman feast, he has to leave his soiled street-shoes at the door, so, before entering Catholic countries, one should divest himself of his national prejudices, and prepare to respect theirs. Thus have I often been compelled at length to do penance, when, after vain endeavours, by flight and circumvention, to escape one "Holy Ghost," a second edition, or some unexpected turn the first one took, would "corner" me at last, and bring me to my marrow-bones.

On the day of our departing from Mexico, we had outridden two of those processions, when suddenly a third bore down upon us from a cross street. The surprise caused us a moment of hesitation, when two rascally looking "Greasers"* jumped to the reins of my horse shouting, "Down

* Perhaps I should explain that this elegant *sobriquet* was invented by General Scott's men to denote the lower class in the city of Mexico.

from your horse, on your knees, you d——d foreigner!" Human nature, at least mine, is apt to break loose when thus suddenly assaulted; so, instead of going on my knees, as ordered, I sent the fellows on theirs, by a bound of my horse, and a benedictory "crossing" of my whip, and then we galloped down the long street of the suburbs, under a storm of indignation, stones, dirt, and dirtier curses, on Europeans in general.

In a few minutes we were breathing again the pure atmosphere of the open country. The sun shone brightly on the valley of Mexico; but the sulky Popocatepetl and his lady still hid their faces in a veil of mist. We were, however, now riding right toward them, and cheered ourselves with the hope that, on a nearer approach, we might get a peep under their envious visors. Our route lay through Puebla to Oaxaca, and so we would cross the mountain circle of the valley at the very feet of those famous volcanoes. Yet the whole of that day passed without realising our hope of a sight of them, so that our accumulating expectations and impatience became at length a sort of mental fever. We spoke of nothing but Popocatepetl. W—— composed, involuntarily, the most surprising variations in the arrangement

of the syllables of the word Popocatepetl; for he belongs, constitutionally, to that class of persons who make a jumble of names. Our road was excellent, the scenery of the valley, most probably, beautiful, but we had no eyes for its charms. We looked but in the direction of the North American Atlas — Popocatepetl.

In the afternoon, we began ascending the first steps to the mountain terraces, and by evening we reached Cordova, a little village on a bold promontory that overlooks the valley at its base, and is situated about ten leagues from Mexico. The sun set, and yet no Popocatepetl to be seen! and when we went to sleep in our *meson*, I had the most absurd visions of phantastic mountain-sized letters dancing in the atmosphere around me, in cotillon figures, composing *tableaux vivants* of the word Popocatepetl!

Before daylight, we rose and sallied from our *meson*, as the first pale streak of light in the east announced daybreak. Wrapped in our *serapes*—for the air was fresh and cool—we sat silently awaiting this, one of the grandest spectacles of nature, sunrise amid lofty mountains. The shadows began to grow more transparent, a faint blush showed from between two, apparently, masses of cloud,

sombre and gigantic, that, towering upwards from the horizon, shut out, from the still slumbering valley the modest approach of Aurora.

But her winning, insinuating smile soon penetrates the hovering shadows; glowing streaks glide slowly across the valley, awakening, on their way, all that still lay drugged by oblivion. The two cloudy masses on the horizon still maintain their position and their sombre hue. All around is bright, clear, glowing, and rosy; they alone look gloomy, undefined, and of a cold indigo colour. After the lapse of a few seconds, these masses slowly contract their cumbrous forms, and now sparkling edges disclose the proud outlines of two majestic peaks.

The larger of the two is nearly saddle-shaped where its enormous flanks taper toward the summit. The "mountain of smoke" is the signification of its Indian name, which we need scarce repeat. The smaller mountain, apparently leaning toward her giant spouse, appears more sharp in outline, its peak more clearly defined, and in its whole form more graceful. Its appropriate name is *Istacci-huatl*, or the "white wife."

Thus we witnessed the *levée* of Popocatepetl and his lady, portrayed in deep purple on a glittering

horizon for a background; the foreground being formed by brown mountain ridges of rugged outline, tufted with airy fir-trees, or crowned with toppling rocks; their terraces and thickly wooded mountain slopes being separated by precipitous chasms. We were told that the sun would remain for some time yet behind them, and that we should get the best view of them by now mounting our horses and following the road to Puebla over the mountain pass to the other side of the peaks. We mounted accordingly, and advanced rapidly on a steep but broad road: here amongst shelving rocks, there over a hard clayey soil, but every where overhung by the graceful fir, leaning over the steep embankments to which she and her sombre companions had advanced. Long grass covered the ground, and the bright face of many a wild flower greeted us familiarly, as playmates on the soil of our home.

We reached the top of the ridge and descended a long slope. At its foot, the road wound to the right, and, as we turned, the pride of the Northern Andes burst upon our sight.

Between an embosoming foreground of forest-clad mountains, their steep sides all feathery with dark green firs, arose Popocatepetl, like a glittering

reflector of the whole blaze of the sun. Around all the sharp cliffs that converge toward its stately head, there seemed to play the lightning of sunbeams, dazzling to the sight. But, between the radiation of those crystal cliffs lay softer lights; here melting into rosy depths; there having their edges of a glowing red, like the sun's eye glaring through a storm-cloud. Such was for an instant the colouring and effect of the first view of this gigantic ice-prism; the next, its colours all swam in a whitish chaos; and then the summit shone again in a new phantastic configuration of millions of rainbows. These changes gave to the mountain monster a look of life. An inward pulsation seemed to tingle in the veins of its head, and anon you see it all hoary, cold, and wintry, making the dark blue of the sky look pale and ghastly around it. The wizard's countenance glows with animation; the bloom of roses sheds a lustre on his wan cheeks, and his snow-crown is a frozen sea of diamonds, and then — all suddenly melts into chaos.

I believe I have now spent enough of words in this endeavour to reproduce in others the same impression this spectacle made upon myself — an impression which surpassed in grandeur all previous conception and expectation. We now felt

that we had seen something beyond common beauty and grandeur, something different from every-day wonders, of which expectation generally draws too flattering a picture, when compared with the original.

The smaller peak was not visible from where we were. We there dismounted and climbed up, for a long way, on the lower slopes, to get another view; but a few hours of exertion brought us no nearer our object in appearance, and we even found the first point of view the most advantageous. We knew that our road would again bring us in view of both peaks, so we remounted and proceeded on it.

We heard in Mexico a story connected with Popocatepetl, the truth of which I will not vouch for, although everybody endeavoured to assure us of it.

Many years ago, a wealthy German merchant, residing in Mexico, became embarrassed in his affairs, through speculation, and, after an honourable struggle, he failed. This reverse of fortune appeared to him irreparable, no consolatory hope was to be seen on the horizon of the blank desert of his future life. He despaired. His existence had become an insupportable burthen to him, and

he resolved to be rid of it. Still he shrunk from casting the disgrace of suicide on a name borne, at home, by honourable relations; so he devised a plan which would accomplish his purpose, without creating suspicion of his having had suicidal intentions.

Over the crater of Popocatepetl hangs a dense cloud of sulphureous vapour, which issues in volumes from the depths of the abyss. Any near approach to the brink of the crater produces a suffocating sensation on every one who has ascended so far. A descent into the crater, therefore, was considered to be certain death. All this was well known to him, so he mentioned to his friends his intention to have a trip up the mountain, and he set out for it.

On the various slopes of the mountain are some villages of the aboriginal Indians. From the last of these he took two guides, with ropes and poles and other articles used in the ascent, and so reached the summit. Here he ordered his guides to plant two poles crossways on the brink of the crater, as he wished to explore the interior. In vain they tried to dissuade him. He merely told them to wait for him, and, on his signal, to haul him up; then shutting his eyes, and compressing

his mouth and nostrils, he descended by the ropes into the yawning chasm.

His senses were in a whirl, his brain reeled, and the oppression on his respiratory organs made the terrors of death palpable. Still he persevered, and, clutching the rope convulsively, he continued his descent, when lo! on a sudden, all oppressiveness vanished, he felt to be in a pure, respirable atmosphere, and, in a few moments more, he stood on firm ground!

He opened his eyes, and here he was indeed in another world! An immense dome of glittering yellow crystals, forming figures of infinite variety, was lit up by innumerable pale blue flames, flickering from cornices, from arabesques, and from deep recesses, or playing, in increasing and decreasing jets, on the walls of this unearthly hall, whose dome was propped by huge fluted columns of a glassy polish, resembling giant bundles of reeds.

For a moment, our hero, stupified and astonished, doubted the evidence of his senses; for a moment, he thought he had entered on another stage of his existence; that all around him was unreal, shadowy, a delusion of his whirling brain. But a dim glimpse of the distant opening above him, through which the white vapours whirled in ascending

spirals, and amid which, at moments, the clear, sunlit atmosphere shone like a diamond, reminded him of the world above, and he then understood the world around him.

He now saw that he was in a cavern of sulphur-formation, an inexhaustible mine of sulphur crystals and *flor de Azufre:* his speculative spirit revived, for he perceived, at a glance, what immense wealth could be derived from what he saw around him. A boundless horizon of hope expanded in his heart, and, while his eyes filled with tears of gratitude to his forgiving God, he gave the signal to be hauled up.

He now perceived that only very near the mouth of the crater the vapours became compressed and suffocating, and that immediately below there was an atmosphere perfectly pure and salubrious. This mine of sulphur soon yielded him an immense fortune, and he returned to his own country a rich, perhaps a better man.

This mine of sulphur is worked to this day, and appears to be exhaustless. At the brink of the crater, where the hero of our tale descended, are still to be seen the two cross-posts by means of which he effected his descent, and which certainly give a colour of truth to the romance, as told me.

On the evening of that day, the 12th of February, we reached the little town of San Luis, whence we saw the glow of sunset playing in fanciful colours on the larger of the two snow peaks. The lesser also had come into view again.

On the 13th, we reached Puebla, after passing, especially on the 12th, those impregnable mountain-defiles, the cowardly and futile defence of which, from their Anglo-American invaders, must ever remain a lasting shame on Mexico.

Next to the capital, Puebla is the largest and most populous town in Mexico. On the whole it is well built, and only in some parts are the houses too much crowded together. There are numbers of fine churches, convents, and other public buildings to be seen; but we did not feel inclined to prolong our stay in a place the reputation of which had filled us with aversion. Of all towns in Mexico, Puebla is most distinguished for the blind ignorance of its inhabitants, in whose minds is fostered the fiercest fanaticism, religious as well as political, strangely accompanied by the most unblushing depravity of morals. This state of affairs is said to be kept in an organised ferment by the mysterious nucleus of the monks who occupy the innumerable monasteries, whither all the threads

of religious, political, and domestic life converge, and are played by unseen and cunning hands.

Only a very few foreigners have managed to establish themselves in Puebla, and of those, fewer have been enabled to remain long. A countryman of ours, a Mr. L——, was the oldest foreign merchant resident there, and he had accomplished the miracle of prolonging his residence for nearly twenty years, under a constant fluctuation of fortune, — wealthy to-day, to-morrow robbed of everything. In spite of these whirling changes, he had managed latterly to secure something handsome for his old age; but at what price? To live in a pool of corruption, with the chance, every day, of being engulphed,—every political change threatening his property and his life;—besides all the dangers from individual envy, fanaticism, and rapacity. He had been *out* several times, which, in Puebla, means not to shoot at anybody, with the chance of being shot oneself, but merely to be shot. By the most miraculous chances, and some management, he had always escaped. I have indeed often wondered at that peculiar talent in some of my countrymen who can live and thrive in places where nobody else can live at peace, and advance in fortune, where it needs the utmost statesman-

ship to steer clear of collision with the Government, and a great deal of individual sagacity, energy, and courage to ward off private aggressions; all of which they manage, without the least hope of assistance or protection from their native governments. Perhaps it is the very absence of this hope—often delusive in the cases of the British, French, and other foreigners—that makes them sedulously avoid entanglement in affairs that do not immediately concern them.

On the 14th we started again, and had, from the south gate, after ascending out of a deep hollow, a most charming view of Puebla, with its towers, churches, convents, and flat-roofed houses, and behind it, a little to the west, the airy tops of Popocatepetl and his lady, surmounting and looking down on the whole interesting picture.

## CHAP. VI.

### FROM PUEBLA TO TEHUANTEPEC.

First Sight of Orizaba.—Its Peak seen from Sea, but as a Cloud.—*Arrieros* Camping.—Preparing Supper: Knives, &c.—The Fandango amid the Mountains.—Musicians recruited from Dancers, and *vice versâ*.—Cries of Distress, and their Cause.—Fatal Effects of a Smile.—Hospitality to Homicides.—A self-willed Road.—Its Disappearance and our Bewilderment.—Contrast of ascending and descending.—Passing the Watershed.—The Carnival of the Waters.—A mountainous Ascent and its Reward.—Exquisite Scenery.—*Cerfvolant*, a composite Horse.—Oaxaca, its Cathedral, Alameda, &c.—More Information of Mitla.—A Record of Remote Ages.—A Record of that of Montezuma.—Mexican Mosaic and Architecture.—Indian Religion influenced by Fear.—The Red Race must become a Myth.—Laughter amid Ruins.—Commissaries for Travellers.—Travellers' Wonders—and Nonsense and wonderful Luck.—Roads: steep, flinty, and waterless.—Interesting Scenery and Indian Villages.—*Arrieros* and Mules saddling and starting.—Character of *Arrieros*.—Tehuantepec in Sight.

On the 14th of February, we were trotting away from the oppressive atmosphere of Puebla, and feasted our eyes again on Mexico's mountain-wonders: Popocatepetl at a distance behind us, and, before us, the peak of Orizaba rising, in solitary grandeur, above a low mountain ridge, to the south-east from us. Snow-clad and sparkling, reposing on

a broad basis, the sharp cone of the peak of Orizaba overlooks the broad plateau of the interior to the west, and on the east, the Atlantic. From afar, at sea, the mariner may spy a shadowy outline of this majestic landmark; high above the horizon of the sea and unconnected, seemingly, with this earth by any visible basis, it looms through the transparent azure of the sky, amongst kindred clouds of the highest regions.

The country around us was fertile and well cultivated, and traversed, here and there, by avenues of dark-foliaged trees, marking the water-courses, on the banks of which vegetation seemed to find its only solace from the merciless rays of the sun.

Go to Mexico, ye hydrophobiatists! and learn to appreciate the music of the water-ripple and its soothing coolness, when your head feels like a superannuated walnut, and your brain rattles in it, when you trot, like its shrivelled kernel shaken against the shell!

We made eight leagues that day and arrived at a delightful little town, where we passed the night, in a very creditable *meson*.

On the 15th, we had to make nine leagues to Venta Salada. Water and fresh green began to

predominate; and, in the appearance of the surface, there was no mistaking the neighbourhood of the garden of Mexico, as the valley of Oaxaca is called, and towards which we were now wending our way.

On the slope of a comfortable hill, that leaned cosily against some bold mountain terraces, we espied the red-tiled roofs of our night-quarters. A limpid stream rippled along the base of the hill, over gravel and snowy sand; and plantain and banana trees held their broad leaves, of transparent green, between the rays of the sun and the cooling wave, as if grateful for the freshness and nourishment imparted to them by their lively visitor. The houses were white-washed, *adobe* buildings, with long sloping verandahs and over-hanging eaves.

An extensive *corral* (pen) was filled with cows, noisy and frisking calves, obstreperous bulls, and some horses of uncertain temper. In another *corral*, the mules of the travelling *arrieros* were standing in clannish groups around their fodder, without the least sympathy for any new comers, that had to await, as yet, the coming of their collation. The pack-saddles of the *arrieros* were ranged in long lines before the house, forming a square

circumvallation, in the middle of which the *arrieros* were sitting preparing their supper, mending the gear of the pack-saddles, joking and singing. Near the fire, in the centre, you might see a broad-shouldered *arriero* kneeling and bending over the rubbing stone, on which the Indian corn is ground into a moist paste for their *tortillas*. He performs this (feminine) occupation cheerfully, whistling and plying the round stone roller over the flat grinding-stone with a pair of naked arms of formidable proportions. The large *olla* (iron pot) sputters over the fire with *frijoles* frying in pork fat; a tall picturesque figure, wrapped in the *serape*, stirs thoughtfully the savoury mess, by means of a long stick. Two or three other persons are grinding ugly knives on a stone, to cut leather or occasionally a throat, if required to vindicate their insulted feelings. The head *arriero* reclines on the ground, and, like the rest, smokes leisurely his *cigarito;* he is meditative, and calculates, most likely, his gains on the present trip, whereof Mariquita is sure to get a large share in trinkets, shawls, and sweetmeats; and two days at Monte and Aguardiente will most likely dispose of the rest. Thus he will enjoy life while he is young; he thinks he will have to marry Mariquita at last, and then he

will be very quiet, and lay up stores of money for his children and the church; and that reminds him of his night-prayer, and the beads of his rosary slide noiseless through his fingers.

The supper is soon despatched: two guitars sound in sweet, melancholy chords; but glad voices ring in tune to them, and lively feet caper over the hard and smooth ground, while the radiant moon comes to peep through a screen of foliage at the merry dancers. Two or three fluttering garments are flying from some pursuing *arrieros*, trying to carry back the fair fugitives to the dance; they are captured, they arrive, conducted along in triumph; others follow in the wake of their sisters, and the *fandango* echoes through the silent mountain glens. Here gladness is at home, and the beaming glances on which the liquid rays of the moon seem to sparkle and to increase their effect, proclaim the bounding of the heart: tiny feet keep time, in rapid yet graceful motion, to which a yielding and elastic shape, rounded and firm, offers no impediment. Their *bandas*, their *rebozos* wave about; their white ample robes seem but their wings; and many a secret is inquired into, is espied, is blushingly told, of that palpitating little heart that nearly bursts all bounds of restraint. They rest

not, the music never ceases, the cool night wind comes, ever and anon, to fan and refresh them with intoxicating perfume, gathered from a thousand blossoms. When one pair sinks exhausted, a new couple fills the gap, and the flow of merriment proceeds uninterruptedly: the musicians are constantly recruited from the dancers, and the dancers from the musicians; they rest not to smoke, they smoke dancing; here and there a veteran will go to a little refreshment-table and sip a drop of ardent waters, which are cooling, comparatively to his ardent nature, and he thinks he can trust, on the same grounds, to a sip or two having a harmless effect on the nature of the *señoras*, and they also partake, after some ceremony. But even moderate indulgence gives courage to proceed further, and you soon see some unmistakable proofs of such progress in the management of the entertainment. Some acute screams and shouts proclaim an exuberance of enjoyment that the breast can no longer contain, and even the young ladies join, in the tune of the music, with voices decidedly enthusiastic.

Thus wore on this night; the moon was sinking behind a sombre ridge of crags, and I was on the point of entering the door of our sleeping apartment, when, on a sudden, a cry, poignant and ring-

ing, broke in upon the joyous chorus of music and laughter. For a moment I listened: a deep silence had ensued, when another cry, so full of anguish, that my very heart seemed to leap to my mouth, startled me, and I rushed to a copse of bushes whence it seemed to proceed. There, on a smooth patch of sward, surrounded by dark bushes, were two figures, one on the ground, the other bending over it, like the vulture over its prey. I saw a gleam of bright steel ascending; a bound placed me between the fallen and the standing figures, and I grasped the murderous arm that would have descended, fatally, for the third and last time. For a second, there was a staggering struggle between me and my blood-thirsty antagonist, who glared on me with an eye full of concentrated hatred: a thick hoarse voice uttered a deep curse upon my head; but the excited frame of the murderer lost its equilibrium, and I threw him to the ground. In falling, I wrenched the long knife from his grasp, and then held him tightly clenched, while tardy assistance was rendered to his prostrate antagonist. But it was too late, his heart's blood was gushing from two wounds, and the unfortunate man expired while they were carrying him to the house.

While I was looking aside at this last operation,

the man beneath me made a last desperate effort; threw me off, and bounded through the crackling copsewood.

Thus tragically ended the scene of merriment; the women stood over the dead man, stretched on a bench in the large room of our night's residence, all weeping and praying. One of the young ones among them, whom so shortly before I had seen lively as a fawn, and blooming like a rose, now crouched at the feet of the corpse, mute and motionless as a statue, with her black hair half hiding her pale, petrified features, and her large black eyes staring, with an unearthly expression, upon the ground. On him, so motionless now, she had smiled but half an hour ago; with how fatal a smile! her lover had detected that glance, had invited the victim to a minute's conversation, and had silenced him for ever!

Such terrible revenge, produced by jealousy, such fatal effects of a mere smile and a glance may appear extravagant to Europeans; but let them recollect, that a smile and a glance mean very little in Europe, and a great deal in Mexico.

The following day, we remained at the house, to see whether the authorities of the district would attempt to do anything towards the apprehension of

the murderer. An *alcalde* appeared, informed himself carelessly about the occurrence, and sent two mounted men after the fugitive. We never heard of the end of the affair; most likely the horsemen never got the man, and after a little time, particularly if any change of Government should take place, the man would be at perfect liberty to return to his native place. Men of this sort generally fly to a neighbouring province, and stay there while their fate is uncertain. Hospitality is extended to them, even when they tell their story, and thenceforth they are spoken of as *disgraciados*, meaning unfortunate individuals, worthy of alms and succour.

On the 17th, we started for San Antonio, Cuiz, Tecomevacca, and Claquotepec, all four little villages of the aboriginal Indians of Mexico, lying in the interval of fourteen leagues, between Venta Salada to Claquotepec, the remotest.

The little village of San Antonio is hidden under a thick canopy of fruit trees, of a dark and glittering foliage. The *Zapote*, a most luscious fruit, along with the *Aguacate*, are both trees that grow to an immense size, with wide-spreading branches; and here they were in their greatest pride, springing from a black, fertile soil, and excluding the trembling rays of the sun, while it is highest, allowing

but the morning and evening rays to have a peep under their dark green hood of clustering leaves.

Cuiz is situated in a ravine, with a little stream; there also fruit trees are abundant, but they do not form such an unbroken roof over the village as at San Antonio. The little church of the village stood there in sad plight; an earthquake had lately upset the calculations of its architect, and the priesthood had, as yet, been unable to produce a sufficient amount of Christian enthusiasm, amongst the poor inhabitants, to rebuild this preparatory institute for aspirants to the most Catholic paradise.

Tecomevacca, the third village, its name meaning "the cow will eat thee," was, as one may expect from the threatening name, a thinly-populated village. The aboriginal Indians, here, as nearly everywhere in Mexico, are specimens of a sadly oppressed race. We saw them a little more to their advantage further on, and there I will speak of them at more length.

From Claquotepec we rode, on the 18th, to Cuicatlan, the largest community between Puebla and Oaxaca. The road, already for the last two days, had been scaling considerable hills, without much regard for the lungs of man or beast; and, at times, we had some difficulty in keeping on the right track.

But, in leaving Claquotepec, we began to find that there was still a great increase of difficulties in store for us. We got into a labyrinth of little paths, where everybody seemed to have chosen to follow his own bent for reaching his destination in the shortest way. It was not long before we came to a perfect standstill, as the last trace of a road disappeared entirely in a broad ravine, thickly wooded, and with a rapid river tearing through scattered granite blocks. We returned in search of the nearest human habitation, and succeeded in finding it after a little trouble. A guide being procured, we proceeded at a rapid pace to make up for lost time. I am sorry to say that the roads we passed over now were not such as would enable one to gain much by great hurry, being mostly dried-up water-courses, at an angle of forty-five degrees of inclination. Here, amongst boulders of all sizes, shapes, and menacing attitudes, we scrambled and stumbled and panted, for a few hours, without seemingly diminishing our distance, according to our guide's calculations.

We had dismounted from our poor beasts, that seemed to throw now and then reproachful looks at their hair-brained masters, for taking them to such uncivilised places. However, they worked

bravely, and we got at last into something like a road, leading over the crest of a long mountain-chain, on one side of which a continuous labyrinth of ravines and precipices descends into a wide sweeping valley, thickly wooded with endless varieties of green foliage. The valley is walled in, at the side opposite to us, by mountains much higher than those we travelled on; and we admired their romantic outlines of grey cliffs, peaks, and rents all the more from not being obliged to travel over them. Our road improved in width and smoothness, and we began to descend again.

Cuicatlan is situated in a fertile valley, teeming with the most luxuriant vegetation, and its church-spire and red roofs are scarcely visible amongst its umbrageous fruit trees. By steep, abrupt terraces, upheld by bannisters of jagged cliffs, we descended towards the valley. Ascending mountains is laborious, yet inspiring; but descending them is simply tedious, and is certainly the worst of the two operations, whatever the poet may say in favour of his "*facilis descensus.*" Zigzag after zigzag we turned, and they seemed only to multiply, and the length of our legs to diminish, until it seemed to us that we were walking on short stumps. But there was an end even to this amusement; and,

reaching the more level ground, we hoisted ourselves on horseback and entered the little town and its *meson*. We refreshed ourselves with some delicious water melons, — a great blessing for the traveller in Mexico, as they can be had nearly everywhere, and at all seasons.

The next day, we had a long day's journey to Las Bocas, following the valley of Cuicatlan, through all its length. The scenery was delightful, the vegetation fresh, and beginning to assume more of a tropical character than we had as yet observed.

On the 20th, the hardest task was before us. We had to cross the main ridge of the Northern Cordilleras, that divides the waters destined for the Atlantic from those destined for the Pacific. We proceeded, by following the bed of a river that wound its way, in hundreds of capricious curves, through a confined valley. It was not the season when the waters of Southern Mexico keep their carnival; they were quiet, sluggish even, and one would mistake their character, judging them by the languid progress and placid temper they exhibit, during the oppressive heats of the scorching season. Here and there, however, you would come upon traces of more lively action, where large islands and promontories, torn from the circumvallation of the

bed, and formed only of ruins and fragments, lie strewn here and there along the rippling little stream, that seems incapable of committing such outrages on propriety.

But let the heavens become overcast, let the clouds sink down to the valleys pregnant with gushing floods, let the thunder roll volumes of growling sounds along the echoing and trembling sides of the valley, and you will see, by the red flash of the lightning, how that little stream, awakened, has arisen into an impetuous giant, roaring in exultation at his restored vitality, hurling along his masses of boiling waters, foaming like the sea, and tossing about, playfully, stubborn rocks, black and massive, splitting and making sport of them! The woods groan, the poor beasts tremble and wail, mutilated corpses of noble trees are swept along, in spite of their wide-spread arms trying to grasp and cling to the haughty banks, where their compassionate brethren will only be involved in their fate if their outstretched limbs are caught by any of the fated wretches.

Such is the carnival of the mad waters, as I saw it in a former journey on the western coast of Mexico; and I was glad, when I surveyed the *terrain* of our route, that we were not in time to witness it here.

After a few hours, we left the bed of the river, that had become now as steep as a mountain, and we ascended the hill side. The road was much better than the one of the day before, but it needed to be so, for the height and steepness we had to ascend were enormous. We laboured and laboured, leading our horses, still the tops seemed never to be gained. But, in proportion to the labour, we found to be the reward. Ever and anon a short glance behind us, to the depths from which we had climbed, gave us an assurance that the view from the top would be well worth the drops of perspiration we paid for each foot of elevation. Towards the end of the afternoon, we reached the top and halted.

Never in Mexico have I seen scenery to be compared with this; there were no snow peaks visible; but there were thousands of sombre hills, each more wild in outline than the other. The glades, at the bottom of the precipices, were filled with tropical vegetation, and the oak and the fir seemed to have climbed to the most naked and elevated crags; and there, in spite of the unyielding rock, and the blasting storms that had bent them into the most eccentric shapes, their roots spanned the grey mossy cliff, and with outspread branches they balanced themselves over the most awful depths.

How can I rightly tell of this immeasurable accumulation of mountains and valleys; how can I describe the combination of sweetness and sternness in the character of each separate mountain, where, on the side of a gentle slope, the cactus, in rosy blossoms, bursts from amid the emerald green of a thousand differently-tinged bushes, enlivened by the smiles of a glowing sun; and, on the shaded side of the hill, stand columnar cliffs, having their gigantic sides crowned by toppling rocks, crested by the airy fir that nods dreamily over the bottomless precipice! I cannot paint this scene of grandeur and beauty: I can but tell where it is to be found, and say, "Go and see it," to all those who may be dissatisfied with my description.

We descended the western ridge until near sunset, and arrived, rather late, at the little village of San Juan del Estado. A very good *meson* gave us shelter and an excellent supper, that is to say, after the Mexican standard of these things, and as fatigue and an uncompromising appetite generally made them appear to us.

Here we were again obliged to get rid of our packhorse, and make a bargain for a new one, as the poor drudge had found the roads of the last few days too much for its strength. We were shown various animals, at prices uniformly high, much

exceeding our intentions in regard to benefiting Mexican horsedealers by our benevolence. At last, we pitched upon a very curious specimen of a quadruped: it had the body of a very, very lean deer, and the neck of a pelican; its head seemed venerable on the first look, but a pair of fiery eyes spoke of a temper unbroken by the trials its body had undergone. I tried it, and found it quick, fiery, and tough; so I dispensed with appearances and bought the skeleton, hide and all, at a comparatively low figure.

When I introduced their new travelling companion amongst our horses, they drew back in disgust, like most high-bred animals, and as we ourselves sometimes do at a gentleman much out at elbows. But *Cerfvolant*, as we called the new horse, did not feel the least bashfulness nor shame at the cold reception, and swaggered confidently up to the manger, engaging himself immediately in a deep investigation of the contents. In a minute he made himself not only at home, but useful. He expelled, with surprising quickness, any intruder in search of crumbs from the feast of the rich; he even playfully poked the ribs of my *schimmel*, in confiding to him, most likely, some funny thing. He astonished the whole company, and took their good opinion by

storm, in spite of their retiring dispositions. In one word, he was the *beau idéal* of an old stager, not that he had ever been, either in or on a stage, but he had learnt many a clever dodge about the road, the inns, and the stable-boys, through many a weary stage of his eventful life.

On the 21st we started for Oaxaca. We passed over a road, splendid in comparison to what we had lately gone over, and reached, through shady forests, the little town called Aragon, where we breakfasted. Travelling over a pretty level road, we arrived, in the forepart of the afternoon, in Oaxaca; that is to say, we entered a long straggling street, lined by detached houses, and, after another hour's riding, we reached the main part of the town.

Oaxaca has many well-built houses, which must have been erected by more wealthy inhabitants than the present occupants. A fine cathedral, in the central *plaza*, is kept, as yet, in good condition, and on the west side it is adjoined by a delightful little *alameda* of shady trees, gravel walks, stone benches, lamps, and an iron railing for an enclosure. We stayed about two days in this town, eating fruit, solacing our horses with corn and fresh clover, and roaming about the old streets. The inmates of a French *restaurant*, of rather a desolate

appearance, were overjoyed to find a few unexpected admirers of French cookery; and they, as well as we, did our best to enjoy the dinners and breakfasts prepared for our mutual benefit.

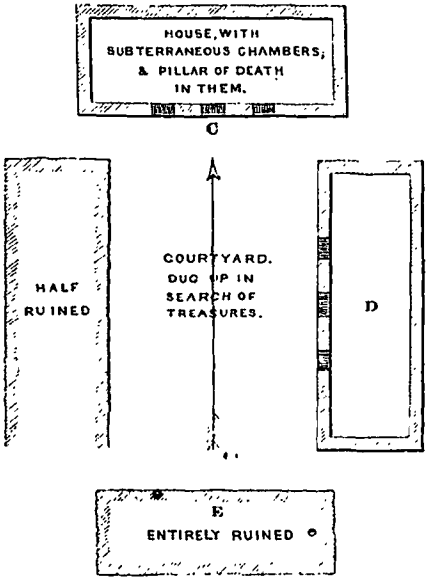
As usual, in most out-of-the-way corners in Mexico, there was to be found here also a German watchmaker; he acted as our *cicerone*, and he informed us of the highly interesting fact, that our route to Tehuantepec would lead us through the Indian village of Mitla, where the ruins of some palaces of Montezuma were still extant. This announcement shortened our stay, and, on the morning of the third day, we saddled our horses, and resumed our progress southward towards Tehuantepec.

About four leagues from Oaxaca, we came to a little village called Tule, where we had been told an extraordinary tree was to be seen, and our countryman, the watchmaker, had strongly recommended us to go and see it. We did so, and found the monster-tree in the churchyard, in front of a little church. The elevation of the tree did not seem so extraordinary, although the church alongside of it seemed but a hut; but the spread of its branches, each of which would have formed a large tree elsewhere, and the girth of its trunk, gave it the character

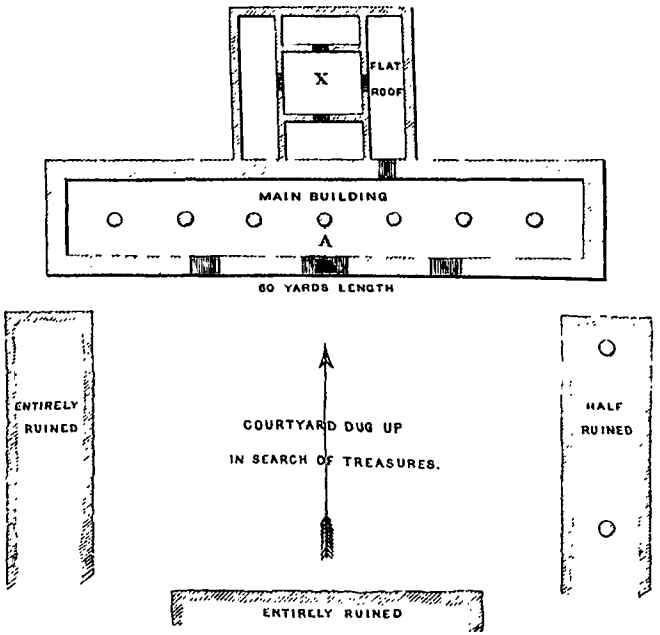
of grandeur fame had endowed it with. I measured the circumference of the trunk, and found it to be forty-five yards. The bole was not round; its section would have been a narrow ellipse; the surface was knotty, with innumerable deep indentures, and it had bold spurs, with fantastic knobs and curious hollows. The foliage resembled that of the pine called "spruce;" but the general character of the tree was different. This tree was, probably, a contemporary of the earliest Indian inhabitants of Mexico; and their generations had passed away, one after another, while this patriarch remains unshaken, — a mysterious monument of Nature, a silent record of remote ages.

Towards evening, we accomplished the rest of our day's journey, and arrived in the little town of Tlacolula, where we had been directed to procure guides for Mitla, as the latter village lies somewhat off the main road.

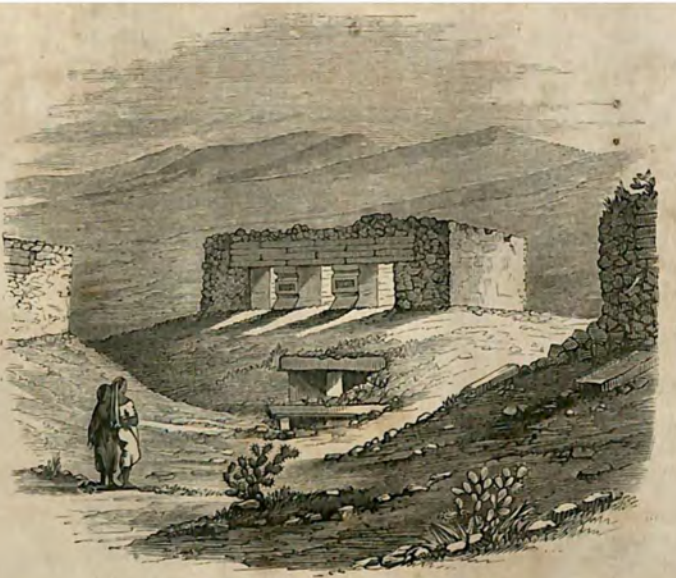
Early before daybreak on the 24th, we started, and arrived in Mitla about nine o'clock. Our guides took us to the house of the *alcalde*, an aboriginal Indian, who received us very kindly, and proposed to accompany us on our visit to the ruins. We drank some good *pulke*, breakfasted and started, refreshed for our expedition.




FIRST GROUP OF RUINS NEAR MITLA.




SECOND GROUP OF MITLA RUINS.



MAIN BUILDING OF THE FIRST GROUP.

WITH PILLAR OF DEATH IN THE SUBTERRANEOUS CHAMBERS.

SIDE VIEW OF A FLANK BUILDING OF THE FIRST GROUP.

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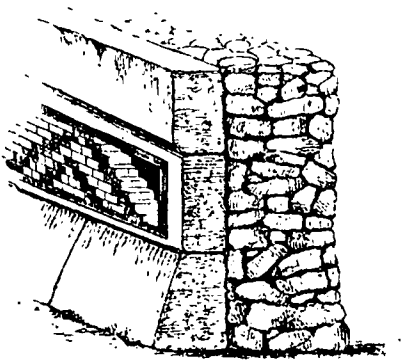
Immediately on the outskirts of the village, we came upon the first group of ruins, composed of four buildings, fronting towards an open square in the midst of them. Two were entire ruins, with but some vestiges of the wall standing; the other two were in better condition, excepting that they were roofless. The main building contains two small subterraneous chambers, wherein a pillar of stone can be seen, which is called the "pillar of death," because even the present Indians believe that whosoever among them embraces this column must die in a short time after. This belief does not extend to other races than themselves, because they have frequently seen white persons trying the experiment without any evil result. The walls of all these buildings have two distinct parts: the inner, which consists merely of round unhewn stones, boulders cemented together; and the outer, which is formed of a sort of mosaic, with this difference, that the figured surface of the common mosaic is formed of pieces of marble, &c., cemented on a bed of stucco; whereas the Mexican mosaic forms its figures by means of the head or outer part of oblong-shaped pieces of stone, that are inserted, the rest of their length, in the spaces left for them in front of the inner portion of the wall. All these

ornamental pieces are formed of a soft sandstone, cut with the greatest attention to the correctness of right angles, as they all have to fit in their whole length close together, and to form a smooth surface exteriorly with their heads. Each piece is about seven inches in length, one in depth, and two and one-eighth in breadth. All the figures represented in the ornamental devices of this mosaic are rectangular or diagonal, and exhibit a great variety in that limited system of design. The doors and windows of the buildings are square, wide, and low; their lintels formed of very large solid slabs of stone.

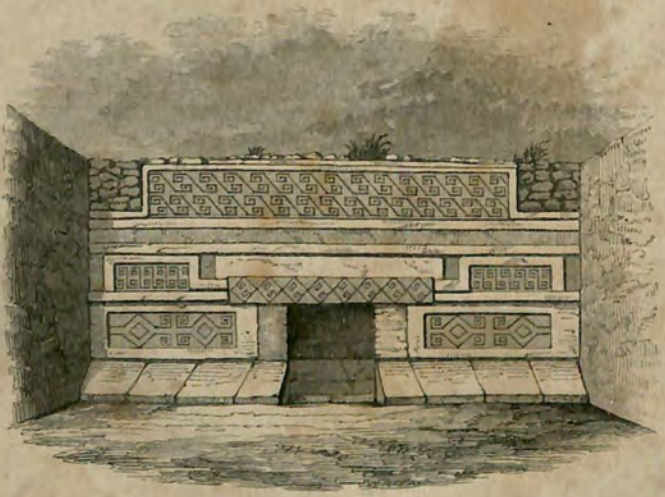
The inside of these buildings had been plundered, long ago, of all interesting ornaments, such as idols, &c., and there remained but the naked inner walls of round stones. The soil of the inner court-yard of these four buildings had been turned, at various times, by treasure-hunting governments, officials, and private individuals. Of course there were long stories afloat about the immense treasures still in existence in that neighbourhood, but none of the public investigations had been successful. The *alcalde* hinted to me that there were two old Indians, "very knowing dogs," as he called them, who are strongly suspected of having fallen in with the



MEXICAN MOSAIC.

*To face page 254*

GRAND HALL OF THE MAIN BUILDING OF THE SECOND GROUP.



CHAMBER OF THE MAIN BUILDING OF THE SECOND GROUP.

*To face page 253.*

M. & N. Hanhart, lith.

mine of treasures, but they keep the secret, and take care to live merely comfortably.

We wandered to another group of ruins, which lies contiguous to the former, and found that these ruins also represent four buildings, whereof three are of similar size, and the fourth much larger than the rest, being the most important building of the two groups.

This last building contains one large hall, wherein there are six solid stone pillars, standing at an equal distance from one another, along the centre of the hall. They seem to have supported the roof, are of granite, each of one massive piece, and have neither pedestal, capital, nor architrave; their height is about twelve feet, their diameter about four feet at the base, from which it diminishes. To this hall adjoins a projecting part of the building, that looks towards the mountains in an opposite direction from the central court-yard. In it, there are four apartments; three lesser ones, and a big one in the centre. One of the small ones still bears a flat roof of stone.

The other three buildings of this group are merely small heaps of ruins, excepting one that has yet a window and two stone pillars standing erect.

The *alcalde* soon returned to his house and left us to our own meditations. A swarm of pretty little Indian girls arrived soon after his departure, all offering little idols of clay or sandstone for sale. Each family in that village possesses a little store of these commodities, which they sell to travellers for coppers. These little idols are generally but flat heads, and are said to have served as ornaments of the interior walls of the ruins we contemplated, on which they had been fastened with cement. All the faces were, of course, true types of the spirit of all Indian religion,—awful, terrible, and hideous countenances, calculated to influence their worshippers with fear; the only feeling an Indian acknowledges as the fit worship of genuine power.

If all individuals, communities, and governments, that have to deal with Indians, Eastern as well as Western, were but to understand and act on this basis of the character of the savage, how many mistakes, disastrous in their consequences, would be avoided! All the Indians of America sacrifice but to the powers of darkness; the good spirits, they think, need never be propitiated, so they pay reverence but to the one they fear. An organisation of mind so void of the generous feeling of love may seem awful, even incredible, but it

is not less true; all actions and emotions which we consider impulses of gratitude and love, they call but effects of weakness.

Unhappy, ill-fated America! how all thy children seem to have been doomed to fall from one depth of darkness into another, until they are now disappearing fast from the face of the earth! They first built altars to their own bloody gods, and afterwards were dragged before a still bloodier tribunal the white man had brought from the East; from which he, in mockery of a God of love, blessed them with blood-red hands! And now, the powerful vices of Europe, with which only a well-trained mind has any chance of a successful struggle, are raging amongst these helpless creatures. The name of the red race of America will ere long have become a myth.

I sat long in the hall of columns, ruminating, sketching, and looking at the little girls, as they flew about, fawnlike, from room to room, laughing, joking, and playing the happy games of childhood, over the graves of the glories of their forefathers. Such fate befalling whole races—nations that were numbered by millions!—is awful to contemplate, if we consider what can have been the faults deserving of such fearful punishment. Their children—

these girls—were certainly not aware of any punishment being inflicted on them; their red cheeks and laughing black eyes had not yet been dimmed by the scalding tear oppression forces from the struggling heart of the down-trodden. But there may come a day when bitter anguish will overtake them, —when, perhaps, a vile outrage committed on them may call for redress, and their heart-rending complaint be met but with a sneer.

Play on, ye little fairies! let your silvery laughter ring in the old ruins; play at shuttlecock with the gods of your forefathers; let your childhood's dream continue as a reality, and the sad realities in your after-lives be but as the phantoms of some horrid dream, that may appear but seldom and disappear quickly!

Our next station was San Dionisio, another Indian village. We found the whole population at and round the house of their native *alcalde*, engaged in emptying numerous pigskins of *pulke*. Their merriment and uproar were deafening, and we had some difficulty in advancing, until we forced our way to the throne of the *alcalde* who presided, with an excellent example in drinking, over the community intrusted to his care. It was a long time before his rather clouded intellect could un-

derstand what we wanted; but, at last, he called his assistants, who were never so necessary to him as at that moment, and he consulted on the demand laid before him. This demand for a room in the *Cabildo*, meaning the building where the court sits, is the customary application of all travellers in those regions without *mesons*.

The Mexican government has further provided that the *alcalde*, as well as his assistants, called *topiles*, shall go about buying, with the traveller's money, the supplies he may need, cook his supper, and look after his horse. This regulation is necessary, as very few of these Indians, and scarcely any of their women, speak Spanish.

The visible distinction of an Indian *alcalde* is a long silver-mounted stick, and his *topiles* wear sticks a little plainer and of a tougher material, made for occasional work on refractory subjects. They are all a set of bustling busy-bodies, full of their importance, which impression they try to convey to every new comer. It is most laughable to see them bristling up with mysterious airs, and bustling about the village, looking for eggs, beans, and pork fat, full of the honour of their commission, and condescendingly polite to their inferiors. But with all this bustle one is

generally badly served; and I often tried to dispense with their services; I found, however, I had reckoned without my host, for nobody would sell anything to us.

On the 25th we reached Totolapa, a little insignificant village, inhabited by Mexicans of the mixed race, the gentlemen of that country. The country wore a different aspect in that neighbourhood; it was no longer the luxuriant vegetation of the valley of Oaxaca; the soil seemed more sandy, the woods thinner, dusty, thorny, and uninteresting; but the mountains did not diminish in grandeur of size or outline.

I here reflected on the amount of nonsense some persons have written about Southern Mexico. In their descriptions, there are but endless forests of mahogany trees, and fruit trees of all kinds, thronged with roaring tigers, yawning alligators, and — best of all — with *ourang-outangs!* I could forgive their accounts of tigers, alligators, serpents, *vomito prieto* (as they call a kind of fever), mahogany trees, &c., for they all exist, only in more modest numbers; but ourang-outangs do not exist in the forests of North America, nor down to the very Isthmus of Darien, for I have roamed through many of them, for the last ten years, from that

southern extremity to the very northern boundary of California, on Oregon. All these wonders are grouped by them around the very neighbourhood of Oaxaca, where the country is less wooded and the mountains, though grand, are barer than to the north or to the south of it. The epithet of "the garden of Mexico" misleads them.

But the best of all is the incredibly short space of time in which those travellers see all those things, which must have been paraded before them by the natives, in honour of the illustrious arrival, — in processions of tigers, alligators bearing mahogany branches, and a few native jugglers passing from death to life in an incredibly short space of time, to amuse the company. It generally takes a residence of months, or an arduous investigation of weeks, before one can fall in with much that is worthy to be seen in such countries.

A man may possibly, and by some strange good luck, accidentally see a tiger on the first day of his arriving in the country of tigers; but he certainly will not see the whole tribe in one night, as two American travellers say they did, in a story entitled, "Three Nights in Southern Mexico." The same travellers are the only ones I know of who

have seen also ourang-outangs surprising a party of men and women in "the garden of Mexico."

On the 26th we reached, by a long and difficult road, a little farm called *Rancho Quemado*, "the burnt farm." The vegetation here is entirely that of the temperate zone, the elevation of the mountains being considerable. Forests of firs sighing in the mountain breeze, grass, ferns and moss, all recall European remembrances. There is a great want of water in the dry season, on this route, and the roads are exceedingly steep, and strewn with sharp flints, that make the greatest care necessary for the hoofs of horses. Horses that are not shod, on fore and hind feet, could never make a day's journey over these roads without becoming lame.

Upon the whole, there hung a sort of desolate look over this part of the country: the grey, cold crags, the sandy look of the soil, and a thinly-spread vegetation, with a hot clear sky above, and no reflecting mirror of water visible below, gave an air of tedious solitude to the road, that weighed on the spirits. Things may be better in the wet season, when the undergrowth and bushes, the oaks and other trees, have a denser foliage, and relieve the bright, tedious light on the landscape by darker shades. There was little travelling on the

road, and we plodded on, rather wearily, over the thirsty soil of arid mountains.

The road to our next station, San Bartolo, was a long and difficult one. We had a great deal of climbing and descending of the utmost variety of hills and ravines. The scenery was, as usual, highly interesting, and of the character last described. On reaching a sharply-escarped height, we saw, right at our feet, in an awful depth below us, the little village of San Bartolo, amongst numbers of cultivated fields, crammed in between two steep mountain-ridges, on a spur of one of which we were now arrived. It was hard and very tedious work descending to the valley; but we accomplished it at last, and reached the *cabildo*, where we sent out our *topiles* for supper for horse and man.

Las Vaccas — a few houses inhabited by Mexicans — was our resting-place the next day; there we got shelter and food, and, the day following, proceeded rapidly on our route to Tehuantepec.

We passed the villages of Jucitlan on the 29th, and Jalapa on the 1st of March. Both are in a fertile undulating country, and are inhabited mostly by aboriginal Indians.

In Jalapa we found an encampment of *arrieros*,

outside the village, and, in the morning, witnessed their packing and starting. It is a very interesting sight to see about a hundred mules being brought up, on a morning, by two or three mounted men, the mules taking each its station opposite its pack-saddle, that, like themselves, are ranged in a long, straight line, like soldiers. Then the saddling commences. Six or eight men perform this task with the utmost rapidity and precision. The next operation consists in placing the burdens, that are ranged in another file behind the saddles, on the backs of the mules. The *arrieros* display great strength and agility in the lifting of heavy burdens, and strapping them tightly to the saddle. The latter operation is done by means of long hide-ropes, that involve and entwine the saddle, beast, and burden in quite a Gordian knot.

So soon as any beast is laden, it goes to the road of its own accord, where a mare, with a bell round its neck, and mounted generally by a boy, awaits the first comer, to lead the van. Every animal, in succession, goes to the road, and follows, in single file, the slowly advancing van-guard. When the last mule is packed, the *arrieros* mount their horses, and urge the whole line to a faster pace. On bad roads, it is a very hard task,

at times, for *arrieros* to rearrange the burdens that will become loose in the hard exertions of climbing: some mules, also, will try by-roads, or fall with their burdens; so that, on the whole, it is a very laborious calling. But, among this tribe of men, you find the greatest amount of industry, and an astonishing degree of honesty and faith, seldom to be met with in other callings, in Mexico. They are, generally, a cheerful set of men — strong, healthy, and given to singing and playing the guitar. They are fond of fighting and dancing too; but that may be excused by the peculiar circumstances of the country. Merchants have, generally, to put a great amount of trust in them, as they often convey freight of great value, over long distances, through the most deserted roads. At other times, they carry goods of their own from place to place, selling at every little village; which kind of commerce used formerly to be a very profitable one.

The nearer we approached Tehuantepec, the evener became our road. We descended, gradually, from the escarped mountains into more level ground, extending along the western shore towards the Pacific. The road generally followed the dry beds of rivers, where, in that season, it was difficult to find a drop of water. All along their banks

flourishes the Mexican willow, in great abundance and luxuriance, in spite of the dry, sandy soil. Here and there, a more fertile soil would bear shady woods, full of gigantic cactuses and a few species of palms; but, on the whole, the scenery is tame, and we were glad when we discovered at last, on an open plain before us, the town of Tehuantepec.

## CHAP. VII.

### TEHUANTEPEC.

Its threefold Communities.—Its Water-promenade.—Female Monopolists.—Majority and *Physique* of Indians.—Predicament of Females.—Manufactures and Agriculture.—Scenery and Nature of Harbour.—Railway-line and Atlantic Harbour.—A Pandemonium of Mosquitoes.—Medical Practitioners.—A singular Specimen of them.—An English Charlatan.—A Case of Indian Credulity.—Quest for Ruins.—Unsuccessful.

THIS town is situated on the banks of a river of the same name. A bold rock, with white cliffs, and covered with mazes of cactus, forms the kernel of the town, which is built amphitheatrically around it, and descends, with terraces of streets, to the very edge of the river. A broad sheet of shallow water, flowing placidly over gravel and sand, winding amongst green banks, the river comes from wide, forest-clad plains, stretching as far as the eye can reach, to the west and north-west. There are two or three sombre peaks visible, towering over the low woods of the plains; they stand out detached from other distant mountain ridges, that are sketched,

in transparent azure, on the dazzling sheet of the lower horizon.

On the other side of the river is built a second part of Tehuantepec, but forming a distinct community. Here, the banks of the river are high and steep, and the houses stretch along the river for a good distance. A third community of Tehuantepec lies behind the rock first mentioned, and is the poorest with respect to the architecture of its houses, which are almost all thatched and small. We managed to procure a house for our residence, as we intended to give a good long rest to our horses and get an idea of the famous isthmus. In a street near the *plaza* we pitched our quarters, and made ourselves as comfortable as only hard-wrought travellers can feel in reposing.

Our house was one-storied, like all the other buildings; had thick *adobe* walls, large, cool, and airy rooms, and a spacious corridor round the inner courtyard, which was planted with orange trees. There was need of all this provision for shade, for the heat was very oppressive. Our indoor style of dress was of the simplest kind, consisting merely of a pair of "inexpressibles," dispensing even with our shirts, and every other article of wearing apparel. Hammocks, of an open netting,

were in great request, and we passed the greater part of the day in them, or immersed in the waters of the river. We would have taken entirely to this aquatic existence, if we had not had to go too far from town to find a sufficient depth for swimming, and sufficient solitude for dressing and undressing; for the river, near the town, was certainly the most-frequented promenade and lounge of the male, female, and infant inhabitants. The crowd there was certainly not agreeable, being of a decidedly mixed character, as regarded age and behaviour, having in common but the uncompromising uniformity of the most perfect undress imaginable.

The river is certainly the *Boulevards* of Tehuantepec: people go and see one another there; business, politics, intrigues of all kinds, quarrels, and declarations of love, are discussed and carried on by people with water up to the chin, or sitting in the liquid and transparent element in the easiest attitude, when tired of floating, diving, throwing somersets, or other eccentric *pas* of the fashionables of Tehuantepec.

There is another attraction, which, with that of the river, divides time equally for the population of this town: this consists of the market on the *plaza*. In the middle of the square is situated a large,

roofed building, without walls, resting on tall posts, and having long sloping eaves to its tiled roof. Here, more than a thousand women congregate daily, to sell and buy. The distinction between buyer and seller is scarcely perceptible, as they mostly interchange their various wares, having but very little ready money in circulation; consequently everything is exceedingly cheap, as there is also a great abundance of everything — fruit, meat, and vegetables. We used to get sumptuous breakfasts and dinners, for the three of us, by giving something like two shillings to our cook, to purchase material. No man is allowed to sell anything in that market: the trade is entirely monopolised by women. Even hay, maize, and the bundles of the green maize-stalks, that are sold everywhere by men, are here dealt in by women. Twenty or thirty of them, all young, light-footed girls, stand with their large bundles of maize-stalks, ready to swing them on their heads and carry them to the house of any purchaser. The appearance of any stranger on the *plaza* is enough to set them all in commotion, and he is immediately besieged and pounced upon as a legitimate prey to these tropical fodder-dealers, who revile one another and the size of their respective bundles until, to prevent immediate combat, you have to decide by

choosing one, who will then step out before you, with triumphant bearing, to the great envy of her competitors.

The population of Tehuantepec is almost purely Indian. There has come lately among it a great infusion of Mexican blood, through an increase of new settlers, merchants, operatives, tradesmen, &c., through garrisons of soldiers, through *arrieros* and other travellers; still the type of the aboriginal Indian is generally preserved, and their language is the prevailing one, as regards number.

The *physique* of the aboriginal Indian of Tehuantepec is rather contemptible in the men, but very attractive in the women. They are, in both sexes, a small race, delicately made, which latter attribute in women can but be a recommendation. Their shape is exceedingly graceful, and, though small, well developed, verging at times even on plumpness. An exceedingly picturesque costume sets off their body to great advantage. Their features are generally regular, well chiselled, prominent, and expressive. Jet-black hair, silky and luxuriant, enframes their light-brown faces, on which, in youth, a warm blush on the cheek heightens the lustre of their dark eyes, with long horizontal lashes and sharply-marked eyebrows. They are good-hearted

and passionate, confiding and generous, but their morals are in a deplorable condition. Yet there is a *naïveté* about them, an apparent, at least, unconsciousness of wrong, that takes from their vices much of their repulsiveness. Poor girls! whence should they learn better manners, as regards either precept or example? Virtue flourishes but where all the advantages of a religious and politically well-regulated society are combined with favourable climate, favourable physical constitutions, and impossibility of idleness: not one of these conditions exists in Tehuantepec.

There was a great depression of spirit amongst the youthful part of the female inhabitants, at the time of our arrival, for it was only a week after the departure of the Seventh Regiment of Infantry. It seems that this regiment had been in peculiar favour with that portion of the public, and from the colonel down, through majors, captains, lieutenants, corporals, and privates, all seem to have fully participated in this favour. Many pledges of mutual regard had been made over by the soldiers, and left as keepsakes to their disconsolate friends. It is a sad fact that soldiers, everywhere, will not only pride themselves on diminishing the number of the enemies of their country, but also on increasing

the number of its citizens and defenders, in the most uncalled-for manner!

There are some extensive tanneries in Tehuantepec, and numbers of very skilful workmen in leather, as saddlers and shoemakers. A good deal of spinning and weaving, by handlooms, occupied a part of the female population, and I was astonished to see proofs of their taste in patterns and colours in the cotton webs they produce for home consumption. The growth of cotton, sugar-cane, indigo (in small quanties), and the distillation of *aguardiente* from sugar-cane, are the pursuits of the agricultural population; besides raising great quantities of horned cattle and some horses.

On the whole, the inhabitants of this portion of Mexico are a good-humoured, easy-going race of people, who, in the hand of better-principled masters, would be capable of great improvement. At present, they are going the straightest road to wreck and ruin, under the guidance of priests and a contemptible government.

The first week, we confined our rambles to the three *barios* or suburbs, solacing our horses with plenty of good fodder, bathing, scrubbing and repose. A short ride in the cool of the evening, to keep their appetites in good order, was all the

duty they had to perform. The second week, we extended our rides to the harbour, called "*La Ventosa*," not distant from the river's mouth, and about a little more than four leagues from the town. The scenery of the harbour is exceedingly picturesque, the seashore being bastioned with high promontories, resembling basaltic columns, rising from the heaving and foaming swell. The harbour, as regards its fitness for shelter, is barely a safe roadstead, and will remain always a sad drawback to the commercial improvements of the contemplated route over the isthmus.

We made excursions to the large village of Chiguitan, where, annually, a much-frequented fair is held. It lies on the route towards the river of Guasacualco, that flows into the Atlantic, at the point whence the projected route is to start. It took us three days and a half to go from Tehuantepec to this river, by following a circuitous route by a few little villages. On the whole, the appearance of the surface, from one sea to the other, seemed to us exceedingly favourable for the construction of a railway. It seems as if the Northern Andes had sunk into the earth in this peculiar spot, leaving but a few ridges of inconsiderable elevation, perhaps a few hundred feet above the level of the sea.

Even these obstacles could be overcome by a little management.

The river Guasacualco is broad and deep, with a heavy current, and surrounded by the dense vegetation of a most luxuriant tropical country. It is now navigable, for nearly ten leagues from the mouth, for vessels of goodly draught, and the harbour, on the Atlantic side, is much better than that on the Pacific. The region all around, as far as the eye can wander, is an unbroken expanse of foliage, — a virgin forest of the most luxuriant tropical growth, — rich, blooming, overflowing with strength and vitality, — a picture of untrammelled nature revelling in production and reproduction from an inexhaustible soil. So far, everything is worth seeing; but there are thorns on this rose; for the bushes of endless varieties are powdered over by countless millions of mosquitoes, that, on being disturbed, buzz in clouds around your head, and seem, as a Yankee might say, "to crowd out" the very atmosphere around you!

Reader, do you know what mosquitoes are? Have the weary minutes of the night been ever counted on you by a hundred stings in each of them? Have you felt the fever that rages in the blood when the fatigue of the day draws your head

to the pillow, and sleep is flagellated out of you by stings that burn like nettles? If not, you will think this chapter on mosquitoes a light matter, to be slipped over in the book of tropical characteristics; but experience would teach you to think differently, as it taught me, after this lesson.

We had been forewarned of what was to be expected, and had brought our mosquito-nettings with us, otherwise we might have been obliged to do to ourselves as we did to our horses, that is, tied them with double ropes, to prevent them running into the river from the sheer madness of pain. Poor animals, they were covered with blood in the morning, my white horse had quite a crimson hue, and all three of them looked exhausted and weary.

An American settler, who lived near the banks of this river, with his wife and family, retired, every day at three o'clock in the afternoon, into the fastnesses of his mosquito-bars, taking with him provisions for supper, a book, pipe and tobacco. Two or three times the Mexican Government sent a little garrison of soldiers to an old fort at the mouth of the river; but, each time, they died out rapidly from fever, caused mainly from the incessant irritation of mosquito-bites.

We did not protract our stay in that neighbour-

hood, but returned, in double-quick time, to Tehuantepec, where, at least, the plague of mosquitoes was comparatively unknown.

There were, at this time, a few Europeans residing in Tehuantepec. Two or three Frenchmen, who, as usual, kept hotels;—another compatriot of theirs officiated as doctor, whenever he found patients, and, when they got well, in spite of him, he would make or mend their shoes for them; thus, having a twofold talent, he managed pretty well to make a living.

There was also, in Tehuantepec, a countryman of ours, a German, and a *bonâ fide* doctor, or rather surgeon. He had left his country thirty years ago, and of this time he had spent twenty-five years in Tehuantepec. He had nearly forgotten his native language, and, worse still, had acquired no other intelligibly, which seemed to be owing mainly to the little use he put the organs of speech to having caused a great difficulty of utterance. Not that he was taciturn, he was rather garrulous; but more by means of gesture, mumblings, and other mysterious operations of the tongue: a few leading words in Spanish, and a stray German or French word, would only serve to keep one's curiosity on the tenterhooks, to find

out the subject of his strange rhetoric. He was already an old man, but hale and strong, loving nothing but hot coffee and a pipe, and hating nothing but unnecessary motion. He had not read a book or a newspaper for the last twenty years; he had received one letter from his relations, fifteen years ago, but had not yet answered it. He told me that he used to keep horses, formerly; but his last horse stood for three years in his stable without being mounted, so he sold it. At one time he had taken to repairing watches, to fill up his idle time, (a rather comprehensive period,) but for some years (he could not recollect how many) he had given it up. Now he smoked and drank his coffee; his patients generally were brought to him, or he would see them but once, and then prescribe and mix the medicines for them, on reports of their changes. Somehow or another, he had no lack of patients, and had accumulated some snug sum. He was married to a thrifty and orderly Mexican woman, ugly as sin, but rare as virtue, in Mexico, for her other qualities. They had a family, and lived very happily and contentedly. There never was a man who had a name so appropriate as his was,—Todt, meaning "Dead."

Withal, he was a very well-meaning man; he came often to see us, and drink our pine-apple punch. We retorted upon his coffee; we had become quite accustomed to one another, and we had even learnt to understand his language. He improved a good deal during our residence, and we should, no doubt, have restored him to his vitality, had we remained long enough.

To give an idea to Europeans how far the charlatanism of some quacks goes in Mexico, I will speak of another doctor, an Englishman, formerly mate of a vessel. He had no reserve before us, and himself told us of all the pranks he had played on the natives. He used to bleed some of them without opening the veins, by merely sucking out (as he called it) the blood. He accomplished the trick by means of a little bladder of blood in his mouth, from which he used to spit the extracted blood. But his great feat he accomplished shortly before our arrival. I must premise a hint on the character of the native Indians. They are cunning, and well acquainted with all that viciousness is capable of; but, so soon as they come into contact with priests or doctors, they seem to become blindfold, and can be led anywhere. In this case, an elderly and rich agriculturist, a native Indian,

had been married for about two years, without issue, to a young and very pretty Mexican girl. He thought the cause lay with his wife, and consulted the English doctor. The latter made a bargain that he would undertake the cure on receiving 300 dollars in advance, and a promise of 200 more, if successful. At the same time, he bargained that the wife was to be under his supervision, and be secluded, with but one servant, in a separate house, for the period of one month. The bargain was ratified and executed, and by the end of the month, the wife, as cured, was restored to her husband, who, in a short time, saw proof of it, and paid the remaining 200 dollars!

During the last week of our stay in Tehuantepec, I learned from Dr. Todt that there were highly interesting ruins in the neighbourhood of the town, at a distance of about six leagues along the plain, and two or three on the mountains they are situated on. He had never seen them himself; but one of his patients knew the road to them, and had often been there, in search of treasures. It appeared that nobody else seemed to know the road to them, yet everybody knew of their existence, and pointed out a high and mysterious looking mountain, on the very top of which they were said to be.

We went to see the guide, and found him to be an interesting old Indian, by trade a saddler. We promised a good reward, and he promised to take us there, on a certain day. Unfortunately, he was given to drinking, and, on the appointed day, was incapable of moving, from the effects of it. When we returned the next day, he was gone to his farm. We had learnt some general directions from him, so we started by ourselves. We arrived at the foot of the mountain, where we had to leave our horses and take our provisions with us. We commenced ascending the huge black rock, that seemed as if it had been but lately lifted from subterraneous regions on to this green plain. We struggled and struggled, came to many a standstill, amongst perpendicular cliffs and entangling brushwood, and had at last to give up the ascent for that day, as we had lost our way entirely, on the extensive flanks of the monster-mountain. We slept on one of its terraces, and made another attempt in the morning; but we failed for want of ropes and instruments, as we could not find the right path, and had to ascend by guess. We returned to Tehuantepec very crestfallen, and waited ineffectually for the return of the guide, who was still sowing corn on his farm. We grew tired at

last of waiting for him in Tehuantepec, and we gave warning to our horses of our immediate departure.

## NOTE.

In reference to what has been said above, of mosquitoes having caused fever and death, at the Rio Guasacualco, I am reminded of having omitted to mention, while writing of Durango, that there exists there a species of scorpion of a waxy white colour, the sting of which is considered by all the people to be productive of certain death. Two instances of this were mentioned to me in proof: the one, of the daughter of a countryman of mine, who, within a quarter of an hour after she had been stung, expired under cramp; the other, of a stone-mason who was stung in lifting a stone, and died in about ten minutes afterwards. The people further asserted that this deadly sort was to be found only on one side of the river; that those on the other side were not considered deadly, and were not so pale in colour.

In Nicaragua, I have seen the same pale sort of scorpion, but it was not considered dangerous; nor, indeed, have I, elsewhere in America, from the northern portion of California to Darien, amongst all the varieties of this charming creature (that so playfully esconces itself among the folds of your night-shirt, or under your pillow, to be ready to give you a jump on moving) — the yellow, grey, blue, and brown — have I ever heard of one that was considered deadly, save that white sort at Durango. At Salt Creek (Moyn) only have I heard of a brown species, almost black, whose sting has caused fever; the stings of the rest cause smart pain, for a considerable time (relieved by hartshorn applied immediately), but have no other consequence.

## CHAP. VIII.

### FROM TEHUANTEPEC TO GUATEMALA.

Departure from Tehuantepec. — A Political Indian Community. — An Ethnological Prescription. — Its proved Success. — Pictorial Recreation and Teaching. — Geographical Prelections. — Temptation and our Escape from it. — Aboriginal Population ceases. — Custom-house Harpies and Smuggling. — A Night of Mosquitoes and Sand-flies. — Charm in Chance Hospitality. — Its Cheap Terms. — Forest Luxury. — Forest Philosophy. — A Storm of Mosquitoes. — Phases of its Horrors. — Expedients for enduring it. — Morning Relief. — A Windfall of Locusts — Crawling, Flying, Hopping, Chewing, or forming a Living Cloud. — A Jesuit Cavalcade. — Its Hospitable Reception. — Its Benediction and "Little Bill." — Beautiful, and, Apparently, Happy Villages. — That Appearance Deceptive. — We enter Territory of Guatemala. — Masonic Signs of Gentlehood in the Alcalde of Retalulehu. — Duplicate Magistrates. — Return toward Inland Mountains. — Vegetation of Temperate Zone. — Contrast of Hill and Coast Population. — Activity and Indolence. — Palliation for the latter. — Distinctions of Mountains. — Famous Parrot and Industrious Indians. — Bold Ploughing. — Improved Roads. — Sudden Discovery of Lake Attitlan. — Ascents, Views, and Descents. — A Kind, Talkative, and Filching Hostess. — Rents by Recent Earthquakes. — Alarming Accident from one of them. — Happy Deliverance. — Arrival at the City of Guatemala.

Our friend, Dr. S., decided on remaining some time longer in Tehuantepec, and we agreed to meet again in Guatemala, where we intended to make a somewhat lengthy stay. We left Tehuantepec on the 29th of March, and arrived, the same day of our exit, in the Indian town of Juchitan.

Juchitan contains about 10,000 inhabitants, being the most populous community in southern Mexico. Its inhabitants have the reputation of being a very unruly set, turbulent politicians and revolutionists.

In the south, no political movement is made without weighing its opinion in the balance of success, which nearly always turns in favour of the side the Juchitecos are on. They have been in Oaxaca often, as well as in Tehuantepec, enforcing their opinions at the point of the bayonet. They have besieged and taken Tehuantepec twice, and Oaxaca once. In the revolution that put Santa Anna again in the presidential chair, they aided the movement, and a large quantity of muskets and ammunition was distributed amongst them. The newly-established Government redemanded the arms after they had benefited by their use, but were disappointed in their expectation. The Juchitecos refused to give them up, and the Government had not the power to take them. This village was, besides, reputed for its hostility against white strangers, or strangers of any kind, and we had been warned not to enter its confines, as the people would, at the least, steal our horses. All this, of course, determined us to go, and see the matter with our own eyes; expecting to find some

new phases of character and interesting excitement amongst this peculiar people.

A Frenchman was said to reside amongst them, doing a very good business, and being tolerated on account of his liberality and otherwise worthy character. This gave us sufficiency of confidence in our undertaking; and, for my part, I resolved to go and ask hospitality of the most formidable of their leaders. There is nothing like showing oneself fearless in the intercourse with Indians; shake them vigorously by the hand, look boldly into their eye, and you have got them as servants, who would have been your masters had your footsteps been wavering, your hand timid, and your eye winking in approaching them. They are, in that respect, like the wild beasts of their forest. Turn your eye from the tiger, attempt a retrograde movement, and he flies at your throat; but fasten your eye upon him, he will quail, and not dare to injure you.

We rode unconcernedly through the dense crowd of villagers, who assembled from all sides on our arrival. We asked our way to the house of the famous Indian, and every one indicated to us the whereabouts, with an ominous smile. We arrived at his house; and it is the fashion in Mexico to ask *posada* without dismounting,—I therefore rode right up to the verandah before his door, where

the host was standing. He was a tall, fine-made man, of massive and deeply-marked features, an eagle's eye, dark and flashing from underneath thick eyebrows, and an arched and muscular brow. He was wrapped in his Mexican *serape*, exhaling the smoke of a paper cigar through his nose, and looking with ineffable contempt upon our approach. Not in the least astonished at his looks, I said my rude say of, "*Me hace el favor de darnos posada?*" ("Will you do me the favour of giving us shelter?") He directed a long look at me, and then courteously touched his hat, and said, as usual: "*Pasa Usted adelante, cavallero*" ("Come in, sir"). And thus pleasantly—the more so from the sheer novelty of the thing — were we ushered into a goodly house, with an obliging host.

Our horses were cared for, cleaned, rubbed, washed, fed, and were as safe as if they were in a double-locked stable, with ourselves sitting on their backs all night. We showed, of course, not the least anxiety in regard to either horses or baggage; for that would have spoiled everything. A sumptuous supper, *à la Mexique*, was set before us, and we did justice to it, with our host presiding, a dense crowd of lookers-on darkening the door, and the privileged filling the room itself. In a quarter of

an hour's conversation, I knew the bearings of my host's opinions, and recognised the main feature of his character — an inextinguishable hatred of Mexicans in general, and Santa Anna in particular. His feelings on these subjects rested upon so just a foundation, that I did not hesitate to pander a little to his prepossession, by drawing, impromptu, a caricature of Santa Anna, which set him a laughing and chuckling with intense enjoyment, which was joined in by a subdued and respectful echoing chorus from the lookers-on, who now crowded faster and faster into the premises. I found a little potful of liquid indigo, and, with an extemporised brush, I executed a sort of caricatured likeness of Santa Anna, in full uniform, upon the white walls of the dining-room. This first picture finished, their curiosity was awakened, and I had to paint the wonders of ships, sailing and steam vessels, railway and mail coaches, European soldiers with *Napoleon* at their head, until I was tired, and dismissed the spectators till next morning.

My friend and I tried to start that next day, but there was no chance of accomplishing it; our host nearly got seriously angry with us, for thus depreciating his hospitality, and we had to stay. That day the first prelections on geography were

held in Juchitan. No European has any conception of a Mexican Indian's idea of the rest of the world. Mexico fills the globe, and, in some remote corners, are some few other countries, whence the white and black men come. I filled all the walls with maps of land and seas, and broke off my lecture only in the evening, when lecturer and audience were thoroughly tired. I must acknowledge that I never have seen such willing and intelligent disciples as these Juchiteco ruffians.

We had tc stay a third day, during which I gave them an idea of fencing, which astonished them still more, as they consider themselves very good fencers with their short sabres, called *matchetes*. To finish the enjoyment of the day, we had some wrestling, of which they literally understood nothing, and were consequently bumped mercilessly to the ground, to the intense enjoyment of all the lookers-on.

On the morning of the third day after our arrival, we managed our escape. We left a little present with our host, who gave us a guide for the first day's journey through a labyrinth of roads, not of the safest kind as regards either life or purses. Thus we got away from all the blandishments of Juchitan, where we were hard pressed to

stay and settle amongst them: men promising to cultivate our fields for us, and pretty women assuring us that they would keep our household in good order; our host added, "and then we will go to Mexico and cut Santa Anna's throat, whenever you have taught all of us to fence and fight like soldiers.

For nearly five days we followed a road that leads near the Pacific seashore, from one little farm to another. The country is perfectly level, and is indented with lagoons of considerable extent. Groves of dark-foliaged trees embosom level pasture grounds, where the cattle roam and browse, or stand in the shade of clumps of detached isles of intertwined trees, creepers, and flowers. The principle of landscape gardening is here reversed; for Nature herself seems to have taken the matter into her own hand, and attempted to produce parks and artificial gardens. A balmy air floats about these natural pleasure-grounds; the sea-breeze, wafted over the drowsy surf, skims along the flowery carpet of the plains to the foot of the aërial mountains, that tower inland over these little model landscapes.

On the fifth day after our departure from Juchitan, the country began to undulate; we ap-

proached the mountains again, and commenced climbing a few of its sloping terraces, that stretched across to the Pacific. On the 6th of April we arrived at the first little village of "Punta." Here the aboriginal population of Indians ceases, and the inhabitants are all of the mixed race of Mexicans. On the 7th we made seven leagues to Tonala, a town of some consideration, and the most populous community in these parts, after Chiapas, the capital of the southernmost province of Mexico. Here, there is again an exuberance of fertility in the cultivated lands, and the vegetation in the forest is luxuriant and captivating. We stayed the following day in the little town, having to get a new mosquito-bar made, as our old one was worn out, and we were advised of its indispensable necessity.

On the 9th we reached Las Marias, a little cattle farm, six leagues from Tonala. Here the road leads through a deep mountain gorge, crowned on both sides by fantastic peaks, perched upon inaccessible mountains, that, on one side, stretch far into the interior of Chiapas, and on the other side fall abruptly to the Pacific Ocean, that surges against their iron-bound sides.

Here, in this pass, a Custom-house guard is

stationed to prevent goods being smuggled into Mexico, by land, from Guatemala. We found five of these worthies swinging in their hammocks, in the farm-house of Las Marias. Their appearance, language, and behaviour, were of that peculiar cast that makes a man's palm itch for the handle of his sword, to drive it through their rascally bodies. This inclination is often given way to by smugglers, and their being detected is not always a cause sufficient for their being apprehended; for they are not men to give up their freedom or their property by force of mere persuasion. I learned besides, afterwards, in Guatemala, that there are roads unknown to the Custom-house guards, that lead through the seemingly inaccessible mountains in the interior; through virgin forests of apparently impenetrable density, and that large quantities of goods are yearly introduced, into the heart of Mexico, by means of these unknown roads. Less enterprising and less determined smugglers pay a certain toll to the guard, and are thus enabled to avoid the outlay of the legitimate duty: a natural consequence to the Government of the miserable pay the officers of the guard are expected to live on.

In the evening of that day, we rigged our mosquito-bar in the open air, as the heat in the

house was suffocating. But we were soon disappointed of our intentions in regard to repose. Here, besides a singing atmosphere of mosquitoes, there were millions of that pest of pests, the little sand-fly, that penetrated through the gauze of our netting. The sand-fly is more diminutive than the midge, little more in size than the point of a pin, and in the performance of stinging as silent as the pin. We were soon ejected from under our curtains, and wandered about, in sentimental despair, in the clear, romantic moonlight. The people of the house and the Custom-house officers slept under curtains of a more closely-woven stuff, that resisted the insinuations of these, the smallest and most numerous and most annoying of all the little devils of torment. They, the people, (not the devils!) slept of course at the risk of suffocation, but they were used to being parboiled in preference to being pricked to death.

In an access of utter despair, I mounted a tree of considerable height, as I knew that, at some height from the ground, these little animals are less troublesome. I tied myself between some of the top branches with a lasso, and managed to pass the night with comparative ease, excepting the aching of my limbs, that suffered a feeling of being drawn and quartered. Before daylight, we made our

escape, and rode on, with a feeling of exquisite relief, through the fresh morning wind that bathed our feverish temples.

We made eight leagues that day, and arrived at a little farm called "Mosquito,"—a formidable name, but fortunately we found, on the ensuing night, that our apprehensions were unfounded, and slept consequently with little difficulty.

On the 11th, we reached the little village of Pijijiapa, eight leagues from Mosquito. The houses are embowered in a glowing, tropical vegetation. Graceful cocoa-nut palms rock on their tall, slender stems, above the denser groups of fruit-trees and plantations; and, from amidst their waving branches, rises the grey tower of a little church, situated on a bold eminence overlooking the red-tiled roofs of the village at its feet.

There is a peculiar charm of adventure about the necessity of relying on hospitality, in those parts of Mexico where no *mesons* can be found. The traveller rides into a village, scans, with experienced eye, the appearance of the various dwellings, rides up to the one that looks most promising, and asks for *posada*. A refusal is never given; the only difference between willing and reluctant assent

becomes visible in the subsequent treatment: in the quality of the place for repose assigned to you, in the manner your meal is set before you, and in how your horses are treated. The poorest Mexican will share his supper with you, and he asks but civility in return. Almost all the country people are glad of these unexpected visits, particularly of white men, from whom they will learn something new, from beyond the range of their surrounding mountains; and, if you have a little trifling present for the bashful, dark-eyed daughter, or the inquisitive or portly housewife, you are sure of getting all their limited means can afford.

Here, in Pijijiapa, we were made "at home" in the house of *the* trader of the village. He was exceedingly kind and attentive to us, and enjoyed the political news fresh from the capital, amazingly. In the evening we had a delightful bath in a beautiful river of deep and transparent water, reflecting the emerald green of the forest that stands along its rocky banks.

Early next day, we passed on to Riobobo. In a deserted farm-house, in the midst of a dense forest, we took up our night quarters. The river that gives the name to this point seemed to have mainly supplied the former occupants with animal food;

for, all around the house, were strewn shrivelled skins of crocodiles, former denizens of the water, unceremoniously transferred from their native element to the "*dura ilia*" of Mexican foresters. European stomachs would, perhaps, shy at the thought of such a dish; but I have been assured that it is excellent, and have myself occasionally rivalled the 'Ichneumon' in the consumption of crocodile eggs, in Mexico as well as on the Mosquito shore, and other tropical regions.

We had provided ourselves, at the last habitation, with provender for our solitary camp: we kindled the cheering flame — the comfort of man and the terror of the beasts — the light smoke curled, in dancing clouds, through the slightly agitated foliage-roof, and we sat complacently beside the crackling fire,—the mightiest, the kindest of serving spirits, conjured up by the magic power of flint and steel. Our horses strayed over the green sward, amongst the more open parts of the forest, busily cropping and crunching the richest tufts of grass; picking and choosing, like true *gourmands* before a groaning table, amongst the variety of nutritious herbs spread over the lap of kind mother earth. Thus we sat, happy and contented, with our eyes roaming

over the scene before us, and our thoughts wandering beyond that limit, forwards and backwards, into the past and the future, with the help of the soft, entrancing influence of the "solacing weed." Give me the woods, the prairie, with the free air rustling in herbs and foliage, a trusty horse obedient to call, a fire, a gun, and a friend, and I will ask no more, at the time. Then can I love all mankind, revel in the idea of small tea parties, balls, and *conversazioni*, and adore old Europe, even with its black, swallow-tail, stiff-collared coats, its hard, formal hats, and the well-trained skulls made to fit and fill the concavity of these civic crowns, the *sine quâ non* for a man who wishes to be thought a man.

Of such height of appreciation will the absence from formerly-known scenes and associations be productive. Go away from home, and you will learn to like it; never "dull your palm" with too much frequentation of your friends, and you, as well as they, will be the better for the breathing time.

Right or wrong, thus I always feel in solitude, and thus I felt in Riobobo, when, on a sudden, my thoughts were brought back to my whereabouts by a peculiar, humming noise, resembling the forerunning sighs of the hurricane. We jumped to our feet, listened for a second, and started to collect

our horses. We then erected four light posts on the ground, and spread, with the utmost despatch, our shelter for the coming storm; not of rain or wind, not of thunder or lightning, or of similar small matters; no, the ominous growling presaged a storm of *mosquitoes!* Our horses we got firmly tied to trees of deep-spreading roots; and then we hurriedly slipped into our fairy fastness of light curtains, and most carefully examined, inside, every nook, every corner, every fold, to ascertain whether there was any weak point for the attack of the enemy, that now began investing us on all sides.

The storm came nearer and nearer, like the first low moan of angry Boreas sweeping over the trembling waters, in search of whom he may devour. The humming sound, if such a sound can be called humming, was now quite near, and began surging around our ears with dismaying earnestness. Our white muslin curtains swayed to and fro, under the action of myriads of the insects putting their long proboscis through the apertures on the web, and gauging the depth that separated them from our sweet blood and trembling skin. It was still perfect daylight, and we could discern how the atmosphere assumed, gradually, a dusty look, as clouds of greyish hue may be seen, on a dry summer day, to

surge and curl from the highway, when a dozen regiments of infantry in columns are panting and stamping onward, to their own vexation, and to the extinction, in clouds of dust, of all those who are doomed to meet them. Here, the flying infantry of the enemy soon excluded all observation of surrounding objects: the muslin, white and transparent once, was now black and condensed, having a sort of hazy look about it, inside, that made us contract ourselves into a ridiculously small compass, towards the centre of the citadel.

The sun sank, the shadows rose, and the demoniacal concert, the hideous, appalling serenade, became, from moment to moment, more intolerable. For some time, a sort of satisfaction cheered us, at seeing the vain struggle of the enemy; the repeated, effectless, and ridiculous falling upon and rising from our ramparts. But the satisfactory reflection that, if we had not had our netting with us, it would be doubtful whether we could have survived the night, in that neighbourhood; even that thought comforted us but a short time; for we soon felt persuaded that the noise that now rolled around us would not let us sleep, in spite of our exertions and inclinations to do so.

For nearly an hour, Von W—— and I cheated

one another by feigning sleep; for we refrained from talking, and, if possible, from thinking, so as not to impede the approach of sleep, by the smallest obstacle. According to this well-understood system, we lay there alongside each other, speechless, scarcely daring to breathe, with our eyes shut firmly to the fate that threatened us; our limbs rigid, and a rising sensation of choking in our throats. But there is nothing like fortitude under such circumstances. Besides, every one has more or less of a reputation for Spartanic virtue to attend to; and thus we watched one another, with shut eyes and ears open, and as acutely watchful as those of some poor dinnerless dentist who waits for the footfall of a toothache-stricken wretch.

After observing, with impatience, one another's capacities for endurance, during a few hours, we agreed, unanimously, and much to our mutual relief, with one voice, that this was unbearable, without conversation, confession, expostulation, or a smoke. As old veterans in desultory warfare can scarcely ever be surprised, thus had I provided for our wants, during a siege, by laying in a store of "the weed" and apparatus for creating the spark of Prometheus, within the precincts of our defensible ground. Soon did we sit bolt upright, heads

slightly inclined, cigars gleaming and fuming, to the intense disgust of the outsiders, who seemed to raise their voices even to a still more angry pitch.

But why prolong a description of the most tedious thing imaginable; and perpetrate thus a breach of the implied promise from author to reader, to amuse him? unless he be one of that unfeeling species who can only be tickled by the woes of his fellow creatures, and chuckle over the aching backs of his associate beasts of burden. Be it, in short, understood, that we did not sleep a wink (a privation nobody, but one's-self, cares a straw about), and that our sleeplessness originated from nothing else but the noise the mosquitoes made; for fortunately there were no sand-flies, as at Las Marias.

The morning of the 13th delivered us from prison, and we mounted our bleeding wretches of horses, that, in spite of their exhaustion, started at a slapping pace from the scene of their nocturnal martyrdom. Napastepec was our day's destination, a populous village, the inhabitants having again more of the aboriginal Indians about them. Similar villages and populations we found in Esquintla on the 14th, Pueblo Nuevo on the 15th, Uista on the 16th, and Uevetan on the 17th. The country all around is of the most fertile kind, the

vegetation rich, water abundant, shade in sufficiency, and a good deal of cultivation in the fields, on a pretty level surface.

During the time of our journey, there prevailed an unprecedented scarcity of Indian corn — the main necessary of life in these parts. Formerly, travellers found it troublesome to dispose of all the corn a few pence would buy, and now we had to pay high, and search for persons willing to sell any at all.

The cause was a disastrous windfall (if it may be called so) of locusts — an unmitigated renewal of the Egyptian plague. This was already the third season that these animals had devastated nearly every corn-field, from the southward of Oaxaca to the last confines of Salvador and Nicaragua, a distance of more than four hundred and fifty leagues. What makes such inflictions doubly felt, in these countries, is the improvidence of the cultivators, who scarcely ever cultivate more than sufficient for the consumption of the season. Thus, if it were not that there are four seasons in a year, that permit the growth of corn, and that the ground produces a thousand-fold the seed sown, great distress would be the consequence, amongst these isolated communities.

It is melancholy to see a swarm of these locusts drifting on the breeze, high above, descending and then falling, of a sudden, on a smiling corn-field, where the rich green stalks are just shooting into maturity and budding with fruit. The owner, with his family, old and young, a few relatives and friends, all stand there helpless; having exhausted their means of warding off the fatal descent, by all sorts of noises, firing of guns and waving of sheets. Instead of the green leaves, there is soon only to be seen the yellow colour of the locusts: the plants, the very fields, become alive with them; crawling, flying, hopping, chewing, toppling over one another, dropping to the ground by millions, propagating, dying, without interruption of the functions of their restless jaws, that might just as well gnaw into the heart of him who laboured hard and long in preparing the ground, and planting for his children what these insatiate creatures feast on and dissipate in a few minutes. You saw but now a rich field of promise before you; again the living cloud descends; the air is darkened; the plague is gone, and has left behind it but a tract of mutilated stalks to the poor wretch of a father to contemplate and turn from, as, in bitterness of spirit, he dashes away the involuntary tear.

In some places even the forest, the rich, exhaustless masses of vegetable production are rifled, and bear visible traces of the devastating cloud having passed that way; or you may come upon a part of the road where their fat, loathsome, yellow bodies are piled over one another, on every leaf, branch, stalk, and on the road itself. Your horses crush hundreds at every step, and the atmosphere around, your ears, eyes, and nose are alive with fluttering and hopping locusts, that rise and fall at every step of the horses.

We passed one place, near Uista, where we had enough to do in keeping our horses on the right road, through a dense cloud of locusts that seemed to hover about ten feet from the ground, frightening the animals with their infernal noise, and getting into their eyes, nostrils, and ears.

Shortly before we passed Esquintla, we had the pleasure and the honour of meeting a posse of ambulant Jesuits on the road. We had been aware of their coming that way, by meeting their baggage, mules, and *arrieros*, near Napastepec, and being told there that these holy fathers were missionaries, transferred from the head-quarters in Guatemala to Mexico, where Santa Anna was just experimentally introducing, by their means, a new doctrinal

seed of rapid and all-subduing growth, to exterminate the party-coloured weeds that flourished on the boggy soil of Mexico.

From a little eminence, overlooking a winding road through the solitary forest, we saw the little cavalcade of eight fathers on ambling mules, penetrating slowly through the obstacles of overhanging branches here, and rutty and rocky declivities there. We planned the innocent amusement of putting their courage and Christian fortitude, in their arduous undertaking, to a little test. We put spurs to our horses, dashed down the hill, and came, on a sudden turn of the road, at full speed, upon the head of the straggling line. With gruff voices we asked for their passports, a well-known trick of highwaymen, a class not quite unknown in the traffic carried on along these solitary roads. The cavalcade, in great astonishment, and legible perplexity, came to a sudden stop. The foremost father faltered something about a great trouble to get at them, and looked, in comical despair, for his companions to come up to him, which they seemed to have not the remotest inclination to do. We looked at him for a while with severe countenances, and asked for a light from his cigar, that was going out between his shaking fingers; he handed it to

me reluctantly. I lit my weed, still fixing a ferocious look upon his silver-mounted saddle, and then asked whether they had any baggage not registered by the Custom-house. To this he said, with some relief in his tone of voice, that it had gone ahead. We winked at one another, W—— and I, as much as to say, we have seen it, at which a vision of rifled trunks, thrown about the road, seemed to rise in his imagination, for he hurriedly asked us where we had met the *arrieros*, at which we laughed a demoniacal laugh and dashed away on our horses, leaving them standing in a state of stupefaction.

A far more serious joke had been played on these holy fathers, in the village of Esquintla, where we learned the occurrence, on our arrival, the same day. On their reaching that village, they were greeted by a gentleman who insisted on having the honour of accommodating such illustrious guests in his house. They acceded to his entreaties, and were lodged, fed, and caressed in the most approved manner of catholic countries, in a large and comfortable dwelling-house, by their obliging host. He pressed them to rest one day longer than their intention was, originally, and they stayed, delighted with their reception, expatiating to him, as well as to every visitor, on the blessings attending such

services extended to the pillars of the Church. They compared his Christian behaviour to the indifferent receptions they had experienced in some parts of the benighted road through this country, where no Christian enthusiasm had as yet greeted their coming, and they assured their host that his reward would be registered in heaven. Much to their astonishment, however, on the morning of leaving, and *after* they had blessed the whole household, master and servants, male and female,—much to their horror, I say,—the ungrateful host presented his "little bill," for board and lodging of man and beast!

He spoke humbly, but firmly, of late misfortunes, of the devouring plague of locusts, and expressed his confident belief that the holy fathers would do something towards his relief: upon which he had counted, and had been anxious also to secure their blessing for his poor family. At first they resisted and pointed out to him how insignificant any lucre they could give would be to the more divine effects of their blessing; but he clamoured for *misericordia*, (*alias* "tin,") and as they were Guatemalians and Jesuits, (an order exceedingly disliked by the provincial clergy of Mexico,) they had to untie, reluctantly, the choking strings of their fat purses,

and restore a mite to cunning poverty, of what they had previously extorted from deluded paupers.

All along the road to Tapachula, this story seemed to be known, and dwelt on with great satisfaction, by the greater part of the population; who, although they consent to be shorn by their native clergy, look with dislike upon foreigners coming in for a share in the fleecing.

We reached Tapachula on the 18th of April, where we had to renew our passports, for license to pass the boundary of the Mexican territory, now only three days' journey distant. On the 19th, we started for Tuxtla, Malicatan, and Ayuta, all three villages of considerable population, like Tapachula. All situated in the most blessed of all fertile and picturesque countries, full of wood and prairie, rock and river, moderate hills, and charming valleys.

The village of Tuxtla, in particular, wears an aspect of well-being, with its neat, whitewashed cottages collected into long straggling streets, between fruitful and shady gardens. Above the whole village, far inland seemingly, looms the volcano of Tuxtla.

All these villages make the impression on the traveller of a happy and easy existence for their

inhabitants, which, unfortunately, is not so true as one would be led to imagine from the appearance of the *tout ensemble.* Every political throe in the capital is felt as acutely in these extremities of the body politic, and little, factious tyrants do all in their power, in a small way, towards the discomfort and impoverishing of the few villagers under their sway, that the greatest tyrants accomplish towards the ruin of millions.

These little communities have repeatedly been engaged in bloody warfare, during any change of government; and the down-trodden party of to-day tramples to-morrow on the victorious one, by right of retaliation. From Tuxtla, we had the choice of two roads for Guatemala: one inland, over steep mountains, and the other along the coast, frequently intersected by broad and deep rivers, that are quite impassable in the rainy season. As the season was that between past dryness and coming rain, and as the road along the coast is shorter and evener, we decided on following the latter.

On the 21st of April, we passed the river of Ayuta, broad and rapid, and, in some places, deeper than we expected, the water being up to our belts and immersing our saddle-bags, with our linen and papers, in the most shocking manner. But our

brave horses stemmed the current, and laboured on to higher ground, much to the disappointment of the villagers on the other side, who had been enjoying the spectacle of two "estrangeros" getting a ducking, to their heart's content.

On the 22nd, we passed the river Naranjo, not so wide as the Ayuta, but of more uniform depth, and so impetuous a current, that, in the rainy season, it is impassable for the best horse.

On the 23rd, we entered the territory of the republic of Guatemala, and arrived in the evening of the same day at the village of Retalulehu (fertile earth). We tried a descent upon the priest of the village, but he was not at home; and, in the meantime, leaving my friend W—— with our horses at the *convento* (a term indiscriminately applied to a convent and a priest's residence), I went in search of the *alcalde*, for the double purpose of presenting our passports and of procuring lodgings.

I found, to my agreeable surprise, that the *alcalde* was a perfect gentleman, who had been educated and had travelled in Europe. After a short perusal of the passports, and a longer one of my countenance, he offered us bed and board, in the frankest and most well-bred manner. I was

only too glad to accept the offer; and, in a few minutes, horses and all were transferred to his house, and we sat before a long, massive, old table, bearing the appearance of being accustomed to festive and generous hospitality.

No person who has been surrounded, throughout life, with a circle of civilised and educated acquaintances and friends; no person who has always been so situated, can understand the eagerness of pleasure a traveller experiences in meeting, accidentally, and unexpectedly, with an educated man in countries like Mexico, or any other out-of-the-way places. There are certain masonic signs, unconsciously possessed by such persons, that communicate themselves mutually at the first exchange of looks, in a few words, in the very tone of the voice, and in the grasp of the hand, between gentleman and gentleman. What a feeling of relief it is to speak again in the matured language of one's thoughts, to refresh the mind with receiving new and variously reflected views of one's own ideas! There is nothing so tiresome as to talk, all day, in the immature language of children, trying to make one's-self understood by the uneducated; and even the pleasure of imparting knowledge to the ignorant, comes, at last, to be felt only like a wearisome drain on

one's mental faculties, which at last pant for nourishment. If we did not find exactly the full measure of intellectual refinement in our kind host, we had, at least, the gratification of being understood on whatever topic we would speak, or ask for information.

It was the more lucky for us to have fallen into such excellent hands, as friend W—— had to keep his bed for some days, and our horses required, nearly as much as he, some repose and good nourishment. For nearly twelve days, our stay was protracted by the despotic kindness of our host, who would not hear of our leaving shortly. He gave me the history of his life, which was a highly interesting one, as I had imagined from the fact of the heterogeneity of his place of residence, his associates, his education, and general appearance.

It seems that, belonging to one of the first families of Guatemala, he had fought against the "vulgar usurper," (as the aristocracy used to call Carrera,) the present ruler of the republic. He had to leave Guatemala, as his party was vanquished, and he went to England, to devote himself to mental improvement.

After a few years, Carrera proclaimed a general amnesty, and our host returned to his country.

He engaged again in some political movement and was banished to Retalulehu, on *parole*, and on duty as *alcalde*. He had, besides his journeys in Europe, seen a good deal of South America, and now, here he was, having become the father of an extensive family, through the mere tedium of living in this secluded place. Not that there was in it any want of population, for I believe the village contained some ten thousand inhabitants, the greater number of whom were aboriginal Indians; but among them such society as an educated person needs was wofully scant.

All these villages in Guatemala are each ruled by two magistrates, one for the *Ladinos*, the mixed and dominating race, and another for the *Indios*, the unmixed aboriginals. The magistrate of the latter is always an aboriginal Indian, who is responsible only to the higher district authorities. I observed, particularly in Retalulehu, and some other places, that the aboriginal magistrates are, generally, an unjust, cruel, tyrannical set, who trample, without the slightest consideration, on the people of their own nation, and that those people have, generally, to apply for redress to the magistrate of the *Ladinos*.

On the 4th of May, we got leave, at last, to say

good-by. I had used part of my time in making a little sketch of our host and hostess, and they were exceedingly delighted with this slight effort at showing my gratitude.

We now entered again into the interior, as the road along the coast was said to be impassable at one place, by a river that already had a great depth of water. By easy slopes, we ascended, during the first day, towards the inland mountains, that gave promise of bad roads and splendid scenery. Fortunately, our horses felt refreshed, and did their duty admirably.

That night we stopped at a farm called San Luis, and had a delightful view from it of the sloping hills, radiant with verdure, creeping up upon them from the wide coast plain, where a long streak, of a silvery tint, at the horizon, marked the distant Pacific. Here and there, amongst the mazes of foliage that roofed in the whole plain, were visible glittering sheets of water, unfolding turns of serpentining rivers.

The 5th of May was a hard day for us. We commenced climbing the interminable slopes toward the *plateau* on which the town of Quezaltenango is situated. The roads were very steep, very slippery, and, in some places, very muddy. We led our

horses nearly all the way, and reached, after eight hours' arduous climbing, a more even terrace of the mountain.

From about the middle of the height we had one delightful glimpse of the country, far down below our feet. After that, the terraces were more retired from the declivities, the trees denser, and when the more open spaces amid the fir trees appeared, the ridge was too far inland to see from it anything. The top of the *plateau* wears a very different aspect from what our eye had been lately accustomed to. The vegetation was that of the temperate zone, open fields of grass, amongst thinly-spread fir trees, growing from a rocky soil amongst fantastic crags of a cold grey hue.

The town of Quezaltenango is rather pleasantly situated on this bare *plateau*, which is of great extent, and bordered by bald mountains, of sharp and angular outlines. The town contains some very creditable houses, and the streets swarm with busy and thrifty people.

The difference between the population of the coast and that of the mountains of the interior, is very striking, as regards even mere outward aspect. The coast people are dark, brown, and often sallow, and it is but seldom that the swarthy cheek of the

damsels is lighted up with a roseate hue, whereas, among the mountaineers, the *Ladino*, as well as the *Indio*, all have fresh colours, clear skins, and are generally of more compact make. But the difference does not stop at outward appearances: it is most marked in the innate characters of the hill-men and the men of the plain. On the coast, under a phase of nature the most indulgent, the most susceptible, any effort at cultivation is rewarded by the lavish fertility that prevails around, over millions of acres, where there is but the wild beast to feel gratitude for shade, nourishment, and shelter; for man, instead of showing his due appreciation of such blessings, curses daily this over-abundant disposition to production, because by it weeds grow apace among his crops, and both have only to take care of themselves; their owner never goes beyond giving his crop a fair start for life, and then he awaits the result unconcernedly, as he is sure of getting all he needs, and is little ambitious for more. The less trouble the accomplishment of a desire is attended with, the less will be the appreciation of one's success, or the stimulation employed to acquire it. People must sweat to make their meal taste sweet. This dispensation, called the original curse, seems to me, as man is constituted,

to be, now-a-days, one of the greatest of blessings: that those whose lot is made up of hardship should dip, from this apparent source of woe, the purest, the amplest capability of enjoyment.

Therein lies the advantage the mountaineers of Quezaltenango enjoy over their neighbours of the plain, and in spite of their obstinate and miserly soil. The *costeño*, in his paradise, yawns his soul out in a very short space of time, while the *montañes* grows stout and full of fun, upon ploughing and reaping, during nearly a century of his merry life.

But let us be charitable towards the people who languish in this paradise, and let the apparent superiority of the one who tills the soil, and fertilises it by the sweat of his brow,—let his merit not blind us to the drawbacks, in the way of development, in the languid, and the stimulants that help the active. It is well known that heat causes laziness, and cold activity; but to ascertain the difference, one should have experienced, frequently, sudden changes from the one to the other, and then he would know how exceedingly little will has to do with the difference between what one accomplishes on a hot or a cold day's working; — how very little, consequently, the result is attended by merit. I feel inclined to go

even so far as to say, that the little labour the tropical man accomplishes in a day is more worthy of approbation than the greater task performed by the man of the temperate zone; for the former needs for its accomplishment a greater moral effort, which is productive of more fatigue, whereas the industry of the latter is but an instinctive movement.

Often have I seen men of the latter class become victims of a merciless sun. The contempt of the new comer for the natives would be withering at first, but, after a short time, the standard of his own activity would range below that of theirs; subsequently, his constitution would, perhaps, be retoned by reaction from overwrought activity at the onset. There can be no doubt as to the one class being in effect lazy, and the other active; but I wish merely to warn Europeans against expecting too much from the introduction of improved industry in countries of a tropical character; to make them contented with their own poor soil and poor lot, and to keep them, at the same time, from carrying their noses too high for having been obliged to be industrious.

Quezaltenango is a little Europe, raised above the low level of the hot coast; and in spite of the opinions I have expressed in defence of laziness, I

enjoyed amazingly the change to its more stirring society, for one may pity and excuse the squalidness of the beggar, and relieve it, if possible; yet his society can scarcely be called as pleasant as that of the sturdy workman. Thus, here, I felt for the poor *costeños*, but I liked the *montaneses*.

On the 6th of May, we reached Totonicapa, situated at the other extremity of the *plateau* of Quezaltenango. The road to Totonicapa is, on the whole, level and easy, as is the case along the whole *plateau*, which contains about ten square leagues. But, on the immediate approach towards Totonicapa, you begin to perceive the first symptoms of the peculiar distinctions between the mountains of Mexico and those of Central America. The former are massive, grand, of wide-spreading base, endless *plateaux*, and long slopes of ascent and descent; whereas those of Central America, and particularly at the approach to Guatemala, are marked by sudden chasms, fathomless rents, capricious peaks, a scattered, unconnected, and varied chaos of height and depth, bearing the unmistakable aspect of having been caused by the most violent and sudden paroxysms of volcanic action.

Near Totonicapa, this character begins to be perceptible. The town straggles along precipices that

mark the sudden ascent to the surrounding rim of mountains that encircle the *plateau* of Quezaltenango.

In Totonicapa, we saw, for the first time, some stuffed specimens of the famous parrot of Quezaltenango, that is distinguished by its shining plumage, of a glittering green, adorned by a long and graceful tail of two curved and sweeping feathers, rivalling the "bird of paradise" in that respect, in addition to its other qualities of brilliancy in colour and grace of form. The population of this town is entirely Indian, numerous, active in both agriculture and manufacture, and in the defence of its original rights, to which latter quality I shall refer more particularly at the time that this peculiar feature became known to me.

On the 7th of May, we started for Argueta, an extensive *hacienda* on the road to Guatemala. We had to climb the surrounding rim of the *plateau* by means of a very steep and unaccommodating road. This mountain-barrier is thickly wooded with pine, and the grass flourishes, for the soil is richer than on the approach to Quezaltenango. From the crest of the encircling ridge you see the marks of industry in agriculture, turning up everywhere to view the promising, black soil in the

mountain-vale and on the hill-side; and often in places where one would be astonished at the daring ploughman exposing his life, and that of his cattle, so near to giddy declivities.

After crossing the highest elevation, we descended again amongst more gentle slopes of fields and forests, and arrived, in the afternoon, at the little village that surrounds the extensive buildings of its proprietor. In the main group of buildings, enwalled and entered by archways to the court-yards of the *hacienda*, is situated the *meson* for travellers.

Quezaltenango had offered us the first *meson* after leaving Oaxaca, and here we found the second, simple and unadorned, yielding but the necessaries of life for man and horse, in contrast to the former, where a stout, loud-voiced landlady indulged us with a few luxuries of the table we had been unaccustomed to. On the 8th, we started for Solola and San Andreas. Before daylight, we were on the road, which, smooth and even, led down and up declivities of considerable elevation, but with some consideration for the convenience of our horses, to which they had been unused.

It was about half-past eight in the morning when, as we were commencing the descent of a towering

Vues Pittoresques &c.

M & N. Hanhart, lith.

LAKE OF ATITLAN

hill, we were astonished at seeing dense volumes of snowy clouds, immovable, and brooding over the immense depth at our feet. We continued descending while the radiant sun rose higher and higher, and began giving transparency to the vapoury masses below. On a sudden, the veil was withdrawn from the scene below us, and the light sparkled on a deep blue mirror of waters, reflecting the sharp-peaked crown of volcanoes that embosom the inland lake of Atitlan.

We were entirely unprepared for this spectacle; nobody had thought it worth while to forewarn us of the surprise: the people we had seen are unaccustomed to be asked after beauties of nature, amongst which they live; unconscious of and indifferent to charms, their eye is sated with by daily contemplation, and not stimulated by variety and contrast. To us, the sudden discovery of their embosomed lakes, their heaven-kissing volcanoes, was like stumbling in the forest on a bed of diamonds, over which the native monkeys gambol and chatter, enjoying but the trees around it, that yield them nourishment, and on which they can hang by their tails and swing themselves over the treasure in the innocent enjoyment of motion.

The mountains immediately at our feet were fir-

clad, bold, and rent asunder. A richer green filled the chasms of the precipices, where, nearest to us, the oak, and further below, a more tropical vegetation, spread its foliage. On the last terrace, or step to the lake, we discerned a tower and a church, belonging to the village of Solola ; and the rest of its houses peeped, with their red-tiled roofs, from all the labyrinthine ravines of the lower terraces.

By ten o'clock, we had descended into the first streets of the village, and refreshed ourselves by a substantial breakfast in a *Fonda*, a simple native substitute for a *restaurant*. We resumed our journey an hour afterwards, and ascended again some of the mountain-spurs that approach, abruptly, the iron-bound lake. We descended an intervening ridge to a valley whose mouth abuts on, and is level with, the lake. Here a river rolls its waters into the lake. We ascended, from its opposite bank, another mountain-spur, steep and tedious to mount, but amply compensating the trouble in the lovely and imposing scene it enabled us to contemplate. On reaching a *plateau*, late in the afternoon, we saw before us our night's quarters, the little town of San Andreas.

An elderly lady, of an accommodating dis-

position, to any one with a well-filled purse, mistress of herself and a spacious house, extended her bounties to us strangers. She had been recommended to us as exceedingly kind, and she gave us a plentiful supper, a good room to rest in, and as much entertaining talk as we possibly could manage to digest, on a long and sleepy evening. I must yet acknowledge that my feelings toward her are not sweet, for I have good reason to suspect that, after our having paid well for all our comfort, some articles of ours, which were missing next day, remained in her uncalled-for keeping.

On the 9th we started for the town of Patzum, our way leading up hill, down hill, through perpendicularly sided ravines; scrambling down them, then up again, in the most regardless manner for the feelings of our horses, who panted and blustered, poor fellows, although we dismounted, and led them over all the worst parts. We passed some mountain defiles, where the road was so worn and deeply cut into the rock, that it became but a narrow lane, for two men abreast, with perpendicular walls on each side.

Here the glorious days of Thermopylæ might be renewed with little cost of valour and risk of life; and, indeed, I afterwards learned that these

very defiles had been the scene of a bloody fight in the last revolution against Carrera. I shall have to speak of that action presently in a more detailed manner.

On approaching Patzum the road leads over a pretty level *plateau*, and here we saw the most characteristic traces of the last earthquakes. For a considerable distance the *plateau* seems to be an uninterrupted level. But, on a sudden, we came to a narrow rent in the even surface, and stood on its brink, before we had the remotest idea of the awful depth beneath us. It is dangerous for those who are liable to giddiness, to look down into these black abysses; their sides, like those of an impassable cleft in the *gletschers* of the Alps, are smooth, perfectly perpendicular, and indented with smaller clefts from top to bottom, from which a few helpless bushes stretch forward, trying, as one might fancy, to reach the opposite wall for support. From the dark abyss, at the bottom of the rent, a few fir trees shoot upwards, and with their tops only reach the dim light above. The whole seems a fit grave for despair to bound into.

These rents have traversed the roads in many places, and thus oblige the traveller to go round their ends, which are constantly eating further into the

level surface, and throwing the roads further back: a process to which the rainy season, of course, lends a helping hand every year.

In the afternoon of the same day we passed the town of Pacicia. The suburbs consist of a labyrinth of lanes, between gardens and dwelling-houses. We lost our way through them, and had, consequently, to thread it back to the main-road, over very uneven ground, cut up by little ravines, clefts, and small water-courses. We had dismounted, and Mr. W—— was leading my horse as the vanguard, I was following in the rear driving his horse before me, when we arrived at a little chasm about twenty-five or thirty feet deep. A broad plank had been thrown across it, and Mr. W—— first hesitated, and then tried to lead my horse over it. I saw it vacillate, stumble, and disappear. A deep pang shot through me; the faithful animal to come to so sorry an ending of so long and so bravely fought a journey! I gave one bound forward, and jumped downward through the bushes of the precipice. There, at the bottom, lay my poor white horse, with his legs doubled under him, unable to get up. I tore the saddle from his back, and cheered him to rise, helping him at mane and tail: the poor fellow

struggled a little, and then gave me a sad look, as much as to say — "I'm done for, leave me to die." My heart nearly burst within me. I took out a pistol, and, for a moment, thought of abridging his sufferings; for I had no doubt that his four legs were broken under him. But, luckily, I observed that the ground of the bottom was a very soft black earth, mixed with rotten leaves; that the sides of the precipice converged, the bottom where he lay being quite narrow; and that thus he might, perhaps, be only jammed.

At that moment four Indians clambered down, and came to my assistance. I put two behind and two in front of him, to give him a lift. So soon as the two forward put their hands to his head and mane, he gave a snort like a lion, with one bound sprang to his feet and ran down his supposed foes, for he abhorred Indians and the very sight of a brown face. And there he stood, stamping, snorting, and looking up, amazed at the height from which he had fallen; and, for my part, I looked at him, and felt as happy as perhaps a father feels when his son is saved from drowning. I led him up to the end of the precipice, where, after some little scrambling and stumbling, he emerged to daylight again.

That day we went on to the Villa de Zaragoza, a long day's journey from San Andreas. On the 10th we started before daylight, and advanced more rapidly on a comparatively good road. We passed in the morning Zumpango, and at noon San Iago. The country here is of a more uniform table-land character, covered with verdure and fields, and traversed by wooded mountain-ridges. The nearer one comes to Mixco the less frequent these ridges become, and, after passing the mountain-spur of Mixco itself, the country is an unbroken level to Guatemala.

It was already dark when we arrived in Mixco, otherwise we should have seen the town of Guatemala from there. I afterwards enjoyed that view, and found Mixco one of the most advantageous points from which the town and the table-land of Guatemala can be viewed. On the evening of that day I had to lead my poor horse nearly all the way, as he seemed to have become lame, most likely from the tremendous shock of the fall. The street lamps of Guatemala were lighted when at last we entered it, much to our relief and that of our horses; and we found, at last, a spacious *meson*, not far from the entrance to the city.

## CHAP. IX.

### GUATEMALA.

Its general Appearance.— Its Plateau, Houses, and Cathedral. — Its useless, but picturesque, Fort. — Domesticities. — Journey performed. — Habits of young "Men about Town." — Their Enthusiasm for Music and for Serenading. — Its Sentimentality and Risks.—Their usual Occupations.—Political Plot for Assassination. — Trial of Nerves of accused. — Career of Rafael Carrera. — His base Beginnings.— His formidable Partisans. — Ascendancy and fatal Errors of Morazan.—Incurs Hostility of Clergy.—Cholera and Clergy aid Carrera, and he becomes Dictator. — Final Defeat of his Opponents.—Discontent in Los Altos.—Insurrection of its Liberals. — Their Conflict with Carrera.—They put his Troops to Flight, and are in turn totally routed. — Phases of Carrera's Power. — Taming of the *Tigre de la Montaña*. — His occasional *Escapades*. — His Capital about to be besieged. — The Town unconscious of Danger. — Two or Three Shots sent as Warning. — Precipitancy and Ruin of the Rebels. — Another but harmless Excitement. — Its happy Result for me.

The general appearance of the town, with its shining white houses, on a wide and breezy table-land all gay with the rich green of its turf-carpet, is exceedingly attractive. Numerous spires mounting toward a serene and azure sky, some milk-white others greyish and venerable-looking, relieve the long rectangular streets and squares from their

platitude. The whole atmosphere of this *plateau* is transparent, mellow, and inspiriting. From the deep chasms that traverse the *plateau*, in most directions, a rich growth of trees lift their foliage above the even sward, which is bordered only by long curves of distant forest, beyond which airy mountains form the limits of the landscape, and blend heaven and earth together.

Nearly all the houses of the town are one-storied, as in all countries exposed to earthquakes. They are well built, neat, and promise shade and coolness in their thick walls, and their broad corridors round the inner courtyards, that are visible through the arched portals that lead from the street into the interior of the houses. As in Mexico, the inner courtyards are adorned by flowers, water-basins, fountains, and a few shady trees, producing that soothing feeling of homely comfort at the aspect of the scene of modest in-door life. There are but few buildings of great architectural merit. The cathedral on the grand *plaza* is a majestic building, but it is not finished, and the absence of the necessary towers leaves a dissatisfied impression upon the mind of the observer. The church of San Francisco has a good deal of

ornamental architecture on its front, but that does not heighten its effect; it produces merely curiosity, instead of admiration or wonder.

Near the entrance from Mixco, after passing the advanced Custom-house gate, on a hill defended by an outer ditch, stands an eminence with the castle of San Rafael on it, intended to perpetuate the fame of its founder, Rafael Carrera, and to protect him from his town, or the town from invaders, as occasion may require. The object in view, in laying its foundation, was at least prudent; but I can scarcely say much as to success in effecting its construction; for, in military respects, the whole structure is indefensible and useless. In a picturesque point of view, Guatemala has reason to be grateful, for the castle gives a bold characteristic foreground to a view of the town.

In an opposite direction from the castle lies another bold and escarped little eminence, called the Cerro del Carmen, with a little grey church on its crest. Thence the prospect of the town, and of the table-land, with all its natural defences of clefts and rents, comes in full view; the background filled with the misty outline, and the vapoury body, of the "Volcan del Agua."

After two days of stay, we changed our residence from the *meson* to a boarding-house belonging to a countryman of ours, where we got a room and very creditable entertainment. There was also good stabling for our horses, and we commenced a regular system of rewarding the poor beasts for their faithful services, with plenty and the best of fodder, with bathing and repose. We had now accomplished, on our saddle-horses, a distance of nearly 700 leagues, equal to more than 2000 miles, and had, during this long journey, but one good rest, in Tehuantepec.

Our host kept a billiard-room, a coffee and drinking-room, and general *restaurant*. Here the young "men about town" congregated, and I had thus a good opportunity of studying their peculiarities. The European fashionable dress was universally adopted by them; and the Spaniard, or rather his American descendant, has a great taste for dress, and generally dresses well. The manners of these Spaniards by descent are rather polished, as far as *tournure* and address go, and the whole of this class made rather a favourable impression on us at first sight, just come, as we were, from the remotest provinces of Mexico.

All Spanish Americans are good players at all sorts of games, billiards, dominoes, draughts, chess; at all card-games, of hazard or of calculation; and, above all, they rattle the "bones" with exceeding zest and dexterity. Here, throughout the greater part of the day, the little tables were occupied with groups of players, drinking their coffee, chocolate, and home-brewed beer, or brandy. I am sorry to say, that the consumption of the latter article went more to improve the income of the host than the wits of his guests; and, on an evening particularly, the young men would become very obstreperous, and demand unreasonable supplies of *coñaque*, which had often to be refused them by our sensible host.

This habit of drinking daily is more prevalent in Guatemala than in any other part of Spanish America, and forms a great drawback in the general character of the people, who, in other respects, have more worthy qualities than other Spanish republicans. There is a good deal more of general information, in respect to things beyond the native limits, in Guatemala than in Mexico. People here seem to see a little more of the just perspective, and true scale, at which the little

world of their country ought to be rated. For, as I said before, in Mexico, the people generally consider Mexico the world, and everything beyond it as mere specks in the horizon. Of course, a few of the educated and more liberal-minded individuals of the highest classes are exempt from such prejudice.

There is a deeper and more general enthusiasm for music amongst the "*Guatemaltecos*," than elsewhere, and all the young men are more or less proficients in, or admirers of, this the most genial of all artistic feelings. Particularly amongst those otherwise prosaic beings, called "young men about town," the pursuit of music fills up great part of their otherwise misspent lives. It is to them the only poetic vein, in the pulsation of which their souls vibrate throughout life; for the spring of unsullied and elevated feeling common to youth, is even more short-lived with them than with young men elsewhere; the divine longing for sympathy between the two sexes, productive always of bringing forward the most tenderly toned and most highly strung effusions of the soul, either in poetry, more or less eloquent, or in action, always generous; this blessing of the human heart, is very

soon converted here into the unsatisfactory pursuit of mere sensual pleasure. But even from this low sink of all that is pure, where passion alone reigns supreme, when the soul looks out from a night of revel back to some sunny spot of earliest feeling, occasionally there will thrill from their songs a few aspiring notes, full of regret, of sighs for a higher sphere of sentiment.

It is not every ear that will detect these purer notes amid the chorus of a drinking-song, the rattle of glasses, and the wailings of tormented guitar-strings; but with the help of a little charitable disposition, believing in the indestructible existence of good even in the worst atmospheres, with such help they may at times suddenly surprise the tired ear.

Serenades are in Guatemala, of all other Spanish countries, most in vogue. If the lover himself is no proficient, or doubts his own skill, some confidential friends are enlisted to waken with song the slumbering beauty, from her dreams, to the reality of his presence. But, generally, the impassioned youth relies on his own powers; and at night, when the vacant streets echo, when the lantern of thieves and lovers is lit in the firmament, he glides up beneath the well-known high-barred window,

and unfolds from his discreet cloak the guitar; draws the hilt of his sword to an easy reach of his hand, and passes his fingers slightly over the sighing chords. Low and sweetly his tune ascends, and mingles with the shadowy pictures of the fairy-land in which the mind of his beloved is wandering; she recognises a well-known strain, and breaks from the silken chains of fancy, to become conscious of the positive fulfilment of her dreaming hopes. He is there, he sings of his passion, his truthfulness, and his faith; he complains of her impassiveness; can she resist? The shutters open noiselessly, and the maiden, fair as the queen of the night, bends towards the musical incense that has drawn her from retirement. Often have I witnessed similar scenes, coming unexpectedly upon these midnight interviews, much to the discomfiture of the parties interested; frequently have I seen hair-brained youths cling to the iron window-bars, in sweet converse with some white-robed fairy; the surprise endangering often the lover's neck, by his precipitous descent from a very awkward height above the level of the streets. These *rendezvous*, with iron bars between, are in common use for all sorts of intrigue: the social restrictions upon the intercourse of the two sexes

produces this; and, as all the houses are but one-storied, the window-sill is easily scaled with the help of a silken sash, even for the least enterprising characters. But not only lovers employ serenades, as means for passing the cool and delightful nights, friends and acquaintances serenade one another; and a constant visitor of a house, if he wishes to keep his reputation as a *galant homme*, is expected, at one time or another, to show his consideration by such a musical *impromptu fête*.

The young "men about town" belong generally to families that have a moderate sufficiency for maintaining their sons without work on their part. They receive a passable education at the University of Guatemala, and then are pretty much at liberty to do as they please. The better amongst them will engage in the supervision of their *haciendas de añil* (indigo plantations) and *haciendas de grana* (cochineal plantations), which form the staple articles for export from Guatemala. Others will spend part of their time in trade and commerce, and dispose of their merchandise in the most gentlemanly manner, after their ideas. Some of them are enthusiastic politicians, and have had, lately, more or less share in some revolutionary movement, particularly against Carrera.

I made the acquaintance of two brothers who had played a very prominent part in the last conspiracy against "*El Indio*," as they call their brown ruler. Both showed a deal of heroism, worthy, if not of a better cause, at least of choicer means for the accomplishment of their purpose. A scheme for assassinating Carrera had been set on foot, and a wide-spread mine of insurrection would have exploded by the success of their plan. A ruffian of an officer of the army was chosen for the execution of the murder. On a grand clerical festival in the cathedral, at which Carrera assisted, this officer mingled with the suite of the President, and came in pretty near vicinity of his victim. He had his dagger underneath his cloak, and, in unsheathing it, it fell from his hand to the ground. The clang of steel on the pavement startled every one; the consternation legible on the face of the assassin, and the dagger at his feet, told the tale of his intentions, and he was immediately seized and imprisoned. His examination brought to light, amongst other names of less importance, those of the two brothers, belonging to an ancient and highly respected family, of Catalonian descent. They were imprisoned, and every art was used to make them reveal

the names of other important accomplices. They remained firm; both were separately confined, and were told, at last, that at the hour of ten on the following morning they would be shot. At half-past nine, the first victim was led past the window of his remaining brother. At the hour of ten, a discharge of musketry announced to the younger brother that the elder one had remained true to the cause of liberty, and had defied the tyrant, and death, to wrest the secret from him. He felt sure he should follow his footsteps. His turn came, he was led to the place of execution, a freshly heaped hillock marked where his brother must have suffered, and an open one alongside of it, yawned for the reception of his corpse. He was asked by Carrera himself, once more, to reveal what he knew, but he remained silent; the blanket was thrown over his face, he heard the soldiers marching up within a short distance of him, the word of command — "Present!" — was given, he heard the click of their firelocks preparing to fire, and the command to fire was given. But no discharge followed. His blanket was removed by Carrera himself, who shook him by the hand, and said that he forgave him for his bravery. A similar trick had been played upon his brother, who had remained firm

like him, and had been pardoned also. A short term of banishment was all the penalty that was inflicted upon them. This act of generosity in Carrera did more to cement the foundations of his throne than all the streams of blood he had shed previously.

There are, perhaps, few persons known in the history of the last thirty or forty years, that have gone through such an extraordinary career as Rafael Carrera. He was born in the village of Santa Rosa, on the road from Guatemala to Izabal, the port on the Atlantic. His father was an Indian, and his mother of the mixed race of *Ladinos*. His occupation in youth was that of the famous Pizarro, a pig driver, or *maranero*, as it is called in Guatemala. It seems that, besides this honourable profession, he followed the more intelligent occupation of a "loafer" — a gambler on a small scale.

The inveterate passion for gambling amongst the lowest classes of the Spanish Americans, gives scope for the most intelligent amongst them to exercise their superior wits profitably on their less-gifted companions. Carrera seems to have been one of those successful poachers of low game, and he became the spoiler of all the farm labourers of the surrounding *haciendas*. He extended his professional visits even

as far as La Antigua (the ancient capital of Guatemala), where an accident happened to him that is characteristic of the difference between Rafael the *maranero* and *montero* (*monte* player) and Don Rafael Carrera, the President of Guatemala.

He had been repeatedly observed to gamble with the labourers of a cochineal plantation belonging to a Frenchman. The latter, indignant at the constant robbery of the wages of his servants, caught Rafael one day in the act of gambling, behind the wall of a courtyard, and kicked him out of the pale of his dominion. Some years after this occurrence, the name of Carrera began first to be whispered amid, and then to resound above, the uproar of bloody revolutions: a President is proclaimed, and his name is Carrera. The unfortunate Frenchman recollects his ignominious treatment of the man who has since then waded through blood to the supreme seat of power; the President's reputation for mercy stood not very high, and the Frenchman thinks of saving himself by flight. In the act of making his escape, he is caught, brought before Rafael, who, to the astonishment of all around, extends to him the hand of mercy, forgives him, and assures him of his perfect safety in remaining on his property.

But between this bright act of true grandeur of

soul and the low source from which it was developed, lies a long period of darkness, blood, and crime. The inhabitants of Santa Rosa and its vicinity are mountaineers: a hardy, wild race, ill-treated by their neighbours, whenever their power preponderates, and feared in times of civil discord; for oppression and consequent want have made of these ignorant and headstrong beings a race of revengeful and bloody fanatics. Their mountainous territory is full of secret and impregnable strongholds, whence, in war, parties of formidable partisans sally, and in peace, bands of determined robbers. Among such a race, a man of cunning, and knowledge of human character, soon acquires influence. A display of courage, now and then, and a judicious and occasional deportment of *hauteur*, go very far with such people, and soon insinuate the possession of capabilities for encountering any dangerous emergency.

Thus Rafael became, very soon, a man of influence amongst them, and, as was said, *andaba con una dozena de compañeros*, which means literally that he went about with a dozen comrades; but it infers that he went about for the purpose of waging a private war, with twelve men ready to cut their own throats or the throats of others, if required, for him.

At that period (and, indeed, as usual) Central America was convulsed by revolutionary warfare. Morazan, a man of great talent, then President of Guatemala, had proclaimed a central, federal government for the whole of Central America: for the five provinces of the old captainship (*capitania*) of Guatemala, after having, in 1821, thrown off, united, the yoke of Spain, had, in 1838, formed themselves into separate states. These separate states were Guatemala, San Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica. Morazan intended to reunite these states into one, and was assisted in this by strong parties in all of them.

For some time his talent, as a captain and a statesman, triumphed everywhere; but he had committed one terrible mistake—a mistake into which great minds are apt to fall—that of going in advance of his age, without possessing that last and greatest degree of power, to drag his blind contemporaries along with him.

He proclaimed the abolition of all the convents, throughout Central America. But the evil that he thus intended to suppress, armed itself against him, and swelled the ranks of his antagonists, bringing with them a wild enthusiasm that blew the flame of their sinking courage into a menacing conflagra-

tion. Literally (it is said) all the monks, expelled from their convents, immediately shouldered the musket, and marched, in rank and file, to give carnal battle to their arch enemy. It may be imagined that, besides those openly active in Morazan's overthrow, the rest of the clergy secretly undermined his power amongst his own party. There might yet have been a chance of his partial success, for, amongst his ostensible opponents, there was not one who could be measured against him in military skill, courage, and energy. But, from an unknown region, an ominous figure appeared on the theatre of the struggle; a man without a name, except that of a contemptible Indian — an obscure *maranero*.

During all the foregoing events of Morazan's exploits, Carrera had swelled his band of robbers and partisans from a dozen to dozens, from a hundred to hundreds, when an unexpected event threw into his hands the reins of power, over the whole Indian population north of Guatemala. On a sudden, a fearful visitation of cholera showed itself in all the little villages of the mountaineers. The people were thrown into the depth of despair, seeing their parents, their children, their brothers and sisters, mowed down in an illness of a few hours. The howls of maddened sorrow rang from every

mountain glen, when a voice was heard proclaiming the source of this affliction and the remedy.

In Santa Rosa, on a certain night, Carrera spoke first to a crowd of thousands of despairing wretches:—"Your wells, your springs, have been "poisoned by the Federalists. To arms! all that "have Indian blood left in them; we will go "and drink henceforth but the blood of the "Federalists." And away they went, carrying the bloody message from mountain to mountain; and the old Indian war-yells were heard again in the Sierra Madre.

The clergy did their utmost to help the cause of Carrera, who had thus openly declared war against Morazan: the inspiration of a divine mission was attributed by them to him. Religious belief, the sympathy of race, despair and want, blood-thirstiness and love of plunder, all fought on his side, in the ranks of his Indians.

Just then, a threatening storm, on the side of San Salvador happened to call Morazan to that quarter, and his divided forces gave way, at last, before the pressure of fanatic masses. A General Paredes defended the town of Guatemala for some time, against Carrera; but Morazan's party became exhausted, and the opposite party, fear-

ful of a change in their luck, agreed to a moderate compromise, whereby order—a blessing long unknown—should be restored. The dictatorship of Guatemala was offered to Carrera, who accepted it, with certain guarantees of life and property for the yielding party.

Don Rafael Carrera was now President, and very soon formed for himself a new party, for this, to him, new exercise of the functions of government. All those belonging to what was then called the liberal party, had sided with Morazan: the aristocrats of property and of the church were against him. Of these Carrera had been first the tool, and then changed positions with them; for he now, for some time, reigned absolute, through the fearful phantom of his sway over the Indians, who, as a party, belonged to him alone, in devotion to his Indian blood. It was this bugbear that kept his own party, in Guatemala, in constant terror of him.

Morazan's last attempt, for rousing his Federalists into action, was made in Costa Rica, and there, in 1843, he paid for it with his life; the ruling party having surprised him, captured him, and had him shot.

Carrera became thus the only man of fame

and power in Central America. The succeeding years of his reign tended only to confirm his seat on the presidential chair, for repeated attempts of the Liberals of Honduras and Salvador were signally defeated, and added new laurels to his fame. In the last battle with them, near Chiquimula, I believe, he fought against seven generals, with General Cabañas, the hero of Honduras, at their head. Ever since, they have left him pretty much alone.

The republic of Guatemala is divided into provinces, and of these the province in which the capital is situated domineers, very unconscientiously, over the rest. The province to the north-west, called "Los Altos," from its mountainous character, has for its capital, Quezaltenango. A busy population of *Ladinos** lives interspersed there, amongst the numerous villages of Indians, who are also of a more industrious and orderly character than the Indians of the neighbourhood of Santa Rosa. The manufacture of woollen garments, such as jackets, trowsers, blankets, etc., is carried on there with great vigour by hand-

* This term is peculiar to Guatemala, and is used to designate the race produced by intermarriage of the white and the red races.

looms. The cultivation of wheat, potatoes, and Indian corn is considerable, and altogether the people work and thrive there in the most creditable manner. Equally distributed wealth is one of the consequences of the general industry of the people; others are, independence of character, and an ambition of constantly bettering their social, as well as political, circumstances.

Petitions for establishing a good college in Quezaltenango, and for a better system of representation, have been frequently addressed by them to Government, during many years past. The town of Guatemala attracts, by its university, all the young men of the republic, desirous of creditable education. There they become unconsciously imbued with the aristocratic principles of the reigning party, and lose a good deal of their hale, provincial morals. The parents in the Altos cry out against such proceedings, and clamour for permission to establish a college of their own. But, of course, they are not listened to. Custom House regulations, moreover, draw the trade of "Los Altos" through the channel of Guatemala, whereas the traders could, with half the cost thus incurred, open a harbour on the coast near to them; but that improvement

would injure the capital, so they must go without it also. The governorships, and all the influential offices of their little districts, are constantly filled with Guatemaltecos, who never listen to their grievances nor amend their wrongs. In one word, they are slaves to the interest of the town of Guatemala, as are all the people of the other provinces.

This state of affairs brought on an explosion a few years before my visit, — an explosion which only served to rivet faster the fetters of the unlucky province. The liberals of Quezaltenango, Totonicapan, Solola, Patzum, and many more towns of Los Altos, rose in arms against the Government. Carrera advanced by Pazicia to Patzum, with his troops, and resolved to make a stand in the mountain-passes there that lead from the northern part of the Altos to the southern. The insurgents were but half the number of the Government troops, were miserably armed, with very few muskets, little ammunition, and had chiefly swords, knives, and lances.

Carrera had passed through Patzum, and posted his troops on the heights beyond it, where, as I have described before, the narrow defile of a rock-enwalled road forms the only means of reaching

that place. The insurgents were led by "a man of the people," known only for his courage, strength, and address, in personal encounters. But they all were animated with burning enthusiasm for their cause, and, led by their gallant captain, they commenced the attack by storming zigzag after zigzag of the precipitous road. The difficulties of the ascent, without the least opposition, are quite enough to exhaust a man before he reaches the top; and now a constant fire of musketry from every bush thinned the ranks of the storming party. Their only advantage was that, at some turns of the road, they were covered by its perpendicular sides, and they had thus a chance of breathing for a minute, out of the galling fire. At the last turn of the road, where it is steepest, narrowest, and presents the longest distance without a curve, Carrera had planted a heavy gun. The Quezaltecos appear at the turn, their leader at their head, mounted on a gallant horse; the cannon is fired into their long line, the ball pierces the horse of the commander, and passes over the heads of his followers, at a lower part of the road. One loud huzza is given, and, sabre and bayonet in hand, the liberals are upon the gunners and the flanking detachments of Carrera's

soldiers. They sabre them, riddle their ranks with lance and bayonet, and cling to them on the ground with their merciless knives. The troops become appalled: in vain Carrera urges them to charge down the hill, he sees himself forced to order a slow retreat. The insurgents follow up their furious attack. Some detachments of the troops are flying before them, pursued and thrown headlong into the enormous cleft that traverses the road there: in many instances the grappling soldier and insurgent roll together into the abyss, over which mutilated bodies are hanging, clinging, and swinging on branches of the trees and bushes that grow out of the sides of the minor clefts. No quarter is given. "Into the cleft with them!" is shouted; a cut or a thrust, and down they go, with a shriek; and a faint crackling of branches, and a dull sound at the bottom, are only heard. The troops still retire before the infuriated Quezaltecos, who are now forgetful of all order of attack and of all co-operation; having become blind with blood, and deaf to the word of command, to form again in rank and file.

The two fighting hosts were now on the even and broad part of the table-land, where the advantages of the greater extension, through the greater num-

ber and the superior discipline of Carrera's troops, soon became apparent. While the Quezaltecos followed blindly in disorderly pursuit, the troops made a short stand, deployed to the right and left, and attacked them on both flanks and centre at the same time. They gave way; their ammunition was expended, and their leader had fallen. At the point of the bayonet they were routed and pursued, and many of them went to keep company with the soldiers they had consigned to the bottom of the great abyss.

Thus ended the battle of Patzum, where Carrera was greatly aided by the courage and coolness of Don Victor Zavala, a colonel, and a member of a noble Guatemalian family.

This battle sealed the fate of Los Altos: Carrera sent some picked governors to the various towns, with express orders to let them feel *all* the misery of cities taken by storm. It seems, from what I heard and partly saw myself, that these instruments of his severity were but too well selected.

At the time of my visit to Guatemala, Carrera was in the third characteristic period of his power. The first period was, while he ascended by the help of the aristocrats; the second, when he domineered over them by the still fresh recollection of the

terrors his Indians had inspired. The third period was, the one referred to, when the aristocratic party had gradually reassumed their influence over him. His very success in keeping order in the country had removed a good deal of the terror of disorder, as the vividness of their recollections faded daily in the minds of the aristocrats. They had cunningly insinuated to him the necessity of overthrowing the disreputable ladder on which he had mounted to power; namely, his Indian friends. He also saw the necessity of curbing their unruly habits, and his friends of Santa Rosa were hanged and shot in the most off-hand manner, for highway robberies or other characteristic crimes. It is curious to observe that, in spite of these proceedings, he did not alienate entirely their sympathies for him; and it is owing, most likely, to this indissoluble hold on their affections that the aristocratic party, instead of throwing him off entirely, had submitted up to this time, much against their inclinations, to be ruled by an Indian. Withal, they had acquired an influence over him, to which he would not have submitted formerly.

The man of war, terrible in the season of floods of blood, when there is a demand for all the wildness of his character, looks awkward when trans-

formed into a frequenter of polite society, in the season of fashionable enjoyments. There, other qualifications will then be demanded of him, if he wishes still to hold a prominent position, after the novelty of his original characteristics has worn off. Carrera was thrown into a circle of new associates, mostly all superior to him in wit, address, and *tournure;* he conceived the ambition of going out of his character of "*tigre de la montaña*," and assuming the garb, the speech, and the manners of a man of the world. He succeeded better in it than might have been expected; yet he never has risen to the requisite height.

This voluntary taming has had its good as well as bad influence on his position. The aristocrats have lost a good deal of their fear of him; but he has gained more of good-will amongst his very enemies. He was originally a man of bad passions, and now he has learnt to restrain them, at least to hide them, so far, from public view. If they break forth in occasional instances, his party winks at them, and covers them up in the best way they can. He is still fond of his brandy and of his mistresses, and still has his rivals in love assassinated; but he is no longer the blood-thirsty tiger that

made man and maid tremble for their safety, on his approach to Guatemala.

The year before I arrived, he had a narrow escape for his life. In one of his midnight rambles, with an aide-de-camp, in search of adventure, he was met by a drunken fellow of a fandango-musician. Carrera pushed him from the side walk; whereat the latter drew his knife and stabbed Carrera through the arm, which he raised to protect his breast. Carrera fell to the wall disabled; and if his aide-de-camp had not drawn his sword for his defence, he would have been killed. The aide-de-camp then managed to run his sword through the body of the musician, who fell cursing the *Indio maldito* with his last breath. The affair threw Carrera's party into some consternation; but they soon found out that it was no way connected with any conspiracy, and the wound, not proving dangerous, healed in a short time.

Shortly after that affair, another happened that served to show, still more clearly, on how weak a basis security and order rest in Guatemala. The Castillo de San Rafael, at the entrance of the town, is generally used for the confinement of prisoners, political as well as criminal. Amongst these were, at that time, two officers of the army, imprisoned for

some act of insubordination, or some political offence, I know not which. They conceived the plan of taking the castle from its guard of about thirty soldiers, with the co-operation of the other prisoners. They were on very good terms with the commanding officer, who used to visit them, in a friendly manner, in their cells. On the evening appointed for the execution of their plan, the officer came as usual on his visit, alone. After a little chat, his two prisoners threw themselves upon him, gagged him, bound him hand and foot, and abstracted the keys from his pocket, excusing themselves, all the while, for the liberties they took with him. They went and opened the cells, and undid the chains of about forty or fifty of their fellow-prisoners, who had been instructed beforehand. They then crept upon the solitary sentinels, and mastered them after a short struggle. The arms of the rest of the soldiers, being piled in the gateway, fell thus also into their possession. The garrison surrendered. Some of them joined the victorious prisoners, and the rest were confined, for the meantime, in the cells of the former captives. One of the officers who executed this daring plan belonged to the artillery, and he set about bringing all the heavy guns to bear upon the most important

points of Guatemala. They had plenty of ammunition and of provisions also, and they laboured silently and energetically throughout the dark night to make their position as strong as possible. This new garrison was a formidable band of the most desperate characters, accustomed to the sight of blood and death, and full of hatred against society that had imprisoned them. Their leader, the young officer of artillery, was well instructed, and of indomitable courage and enterprise, as this undertaking alone proves.

Their plan was to force the authorities of Guatemala to sign a pardon, and pay a ransom for their abandoning their commanding position: a hair-brained undertaking, but it seems none of them very clearly knew what they wanted.

The morning broke calmly over Guatemala, that, as yet, was unconscious of the danger hanging over its head, and threatening its very existence. The officer who had been in command before was then released from his bonds, and sent out of the castle to communicate to Carrera the terms and threats of the new garrison. This communication threw the inhabitants into the utmost consternation and perplexity, particularly as every one knew, or heard very soon, that all the ammunition of the govern-

ment was in the Castle of San Rafael, which knowledge had formed part of the base on which the two officers had formed their plan.

To show the inhabitants that the garrison of the castle was capable of acting in earnest, they fired a large round-shot into the dwelling-house of the Prime Minister, Pavon, to influence his counsel favourably. Two or three other shots were fired at other points, to show their will, their skill, and its effects.

On the whole, it was a critical affair; so Carrera temporised with them, and only invested all the covered avenues to the castle to prevent more provisions going in, or deserters going out, without his knowledge. Carrera knew the men he had to deal with: he sent a *parlementaire* to protract the negotiation as much as possible, until evening. Towards dusk, he sent various women near the offside of the castle, whence, as he calculated, they were very soon hailed. They all had *agua ardiente* with them, and a drop once tasted made the rebels roar for more. The young commander did his utmost to prevent the thing going further; but his troops had not yet learnt sufficient discipline to allow any man with impunity to come between them and their wine or their women.

He had to desist; the madmen drank like sailors in a sinking ship, when a lucid thought struck one amongst them. "Let us escape now," he said, "as long as they are afraid of us!" His proposal was applauded, and immediately executed. A few of the first were caught immediately by the soldiers; the rest fought their way through, and then dispersed all over the country. I have only to state that they were all retaken, one by one, and amongst them the young officer, after a desperate single-handed defence. Carrera, very injudiciously, had him, as well as all the ringleaders, shot: he died looking with unblanched cheek into the muzzles of the guns, rejecting the blanket generally used for hiding the approach of death.

It was some time in August, during our stay in Guatemala, that two countrymen of mine arrived there, both learned men, in search of scientific and interesting novelties in natural history and ethnology. The former department belonged to the elder of the two doctors, and the latter to the younger. The butterflies, beetles, and other innocent insects of the environs of Guatemala were soon thrown into a state of excitement and panic through the unrelenting persecutions of the indefatigable old doctor; and the monks and clerics of Guatemala

were roused from dozing in their libraries by the younger one, who invaded every nook and corner of their dusty bookshelves, ransacking the old annals and chronicles for a fund of new literary capital from the oldest sources.

The whole scientific world of Guatemala was put into a state of fever by the two enterprising hunters in the field of knowledge, and the lusty horns of their cheerful voices rang from morning till night through the astonished streets of Guatemala. The two partners in the business of gathering and collecting knowledge, and disposing of it to the public at liberal prices, had the various duties in such a business equitably divided amongst them. The elder doctor, absorbed by the active department of out-of-door work, could not be bothered with making acquaintances or receiving visitors. The talking and complimentary part of their duties fell thus to the share of the younger, who had an inexhaustible fund of politeness and amiability always ready on hand. However superfluous such exertion may seem to the uninitiated, in Spanish countries a pliant amiability is the best coin to travel with, as it is so little cumbersome, so compressible into a small compass, and so exceedingly cheap in laying in.

I made the acquaintance of these gentlemen about a month after their arrival; and the younger informed me of a very interesting visit he had just paid to a district that lies to the north of Guatemala, where a tribe of aboriginal Indians still exists, with all their primary customs entire. I had long desired to hear a little more of these interesting Indians, and had been thinking of going to see them. The Doctor urged me strongly to go immediately, and to bring back some sketches of all interesting matters. To that end, he introduced me to their priest, who was just then sojourning in Guatemala, and the latter very kindly invited me to pay him a visit of a month or so.

# CHAP. X.

## SANTA CATARINA.

Road to Santa Catarina.—Striking Aspect of the Town.—Kind Reception there.—A Route formerly Dangerous.—Dress and Pedestrianism of Indians.—Dress and Seclusion of their Women.—Religious Belief. Immolation.—Waited on by the High Priest.—Examine his Vestments.—Great Influence of the Padre.—Adored and watched over by his Flock.—Tithes cheerfully paid.—Rise and Banishment of the Padre.—Original State of his Flock.—Drunken, licentious, &c.—Conspiracy to murder him.—Defeated by one Friend—And a faithful Steed.—Reaction in his Favour.—He forms a chosen Party.—Another Storm for his Overthrow.—Its fearful Aspect.—Threatening instant Death. His Ingenuity saves him—And prostrates his Enemies.—Description of the Merimba.—Government of those Indians.—Don Vicente's Influence over them.—Their Jealousy of Strangers—And Suspicion of my pursuits.—Singular Steam-bath.—Guatemalan Society.—Two gifted Cousins.—Various Circles—One peculiarly Guatemalan.—Visit to La Antigua.—Decay in its Cochineal Trade.—Nature has frowned on it.—American Calumny on Chatfield.—Pastimes and Reflections.—Movement of Immovables.—A second Shock no Joke.—Houses deserted.—A goodly Display of Courage.—Encampment in Squares, &c.—Swaggering of some Youngsters.—Waving of the Streets.—Abatement of the Shocks.—A characteristic Incident—Of Revenge cherished in Secret,—And of deadly Remorse.—Cowardice and Suicide incompatible.—Farewell to Guatemala.

AT Patzum, the road to the aforementioned Indian villages branches off to the westward, from the main road to Quezaltenango. From that point, the road descends into the channel of a little river, enwalled by bold crags on one side, and a thick forest on

the other. You next reascend one of the banks, and travel over some tolerably even table-land, which reaches to the banks of the mountain lake of Atitlan, the road making thus a short cut from Patzum to Solola. From Sòlola the direction of the road becomes still more westerly, and a very arduous climbing commences. You next pass two little villages of Indians, on the plateau of an elevated table-land, whence the road dives into all sorts of tedious depths, and crawls up highly picturesque hills. I had scarcely a fair chance of appreciating all the beauty of this wild scenery, as it rained in torrents, all day long, the roads becoming very slippery, and my horse, a hired one, becoming very tired and stupid. In some descents it was necessary to throw the horse on its haunches, and make it descend on the principle of a slide, while I leaned far back, steering the head with all my might. This process was favoured and accelerated greatly by the soil being of a fine clay, fit for pottery ware, pipes, and even statues of parrots, boys with thorns in their feet, Napoleons, nodding mandarins, and such wonders of art.

Somehow or another, I reached safely the rim of the mountain-cauldron, at the bottom of which Santa Catarina, the capital of this Indian territory,

is situated. Another very safe and very quick descent landed me, at last, on a road which I was happy to find horizontal, — the form most desired by mules, asses, horses, and tired travellers.

At a turn of the road, round the towering front of a gigantic promontory of basalt, the roofs and houses of the village came in view. All were covered with red tiles, had whitewashed walls, and astonished me by their number, peeping from a labyrinth of gullies and ravines — here on the side of a hill, there on the top, disseminated, amphitheatrically, amongst bush and crag. A venerable old church, with a modest curacy adjoining, formed the centre of the nucleus of houses, which there followed the more regular lines of streets. But above all, around all, this dissemination of roofs towered hills, apparently inaccessible, piled upon hills, shutting out the sky, all but a blue dome overhead. Fields of *wheat* and potatoes were discernible on every more gentle slope, and on the more even of the mountain terraces.

The basaltic promontory of which I spoke, as revealing the first view of the village, is but a pillar of a solitary mountain colossus, disconnected with the general wall round the valley, and buttressed by perpendicular ramparts of basaltic columns, here

jagged and split, there massive and unshaken, shoulder to shoulder, with their widespreading bases washed by a dancing little torrent. The rounded head of this mountain is frizzled with a forest of cedars, of a dark bluish-green, and around its edges there was then a yellow field of *wheat*, on which a labourer appeared but the size of a crawling ant.

The most hospitable, the kindest, reception awaited me, at the *convento*. There was a separate house for the reception of strangers, where a spacious room was assigned for my use; and from that day henceforth the most unwearying attentions were lavished on me by my generous host, with whom I became most intimately acquainted, during my stay of more than a month.

The communities of Santa Catarina, Santa Lucia, and of a third one, the name of which has slipt from my memory, have scarcely ever been visited by white strangers. Even the *Ladinos* of Guatemala have only, very lately, attempted to pass through the dominion of this race of Indians. They have always kept separate from the Indians of other communities, with the most jealous watchfulness. Their submission to the Spaniards, from the time of the conquest, was always very equivocal. Though

INDIAN HEADMAN AND WOMAN OF SANTA CATARINA.

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always defeated in any attempt outside of their native fastnesses, they have never been much meddled with in their own territory. The government, very wisely, has contented itself with a very superficial promise of allegiance, to the observance of which four centuries of Spanish power have accustomed the very independent spirit of these mountaineers.

Since the advent of Carrera, whose Indian blood gives a semblance of the re-establishment of Indian supremacy, these brothers of his by-race have remained especially quiet. But, previously, no traveller, native or stranger, dared to take the road of Santa Catarina; and many a fool-hardy one has carried his bones thither to blanch, unburied, in some dark ravine or beneath some precipice. It is only since the accession of the present curate or parish priest, more than eighteen years ago, at the time of my visit, that a few strangers take now and then the short cut to Quezaltenango from Solola, without any great risk of their lives.

The dress of these Indians is, at the present day, the same they wore on the day of the conquest. They weave wool for their black jackets, cotton for their wide, white trousers, which are drawn up at the waist, and display their muscular legs, and they

have sandals on their feet when on a journey. The head is covered with a white cotton cloth, wound, in turban fashion, around it, and having its long ends hanging over the back. A sash, dyed blue, red, or violet, from native dye-woods, confines the waist and keeps up the trousers, and its fringed ends hang down in front. The head-men wear a sort of open-sleeved blue jacket of wool, over the black one, and, over the white head-dress, a black broad-brimmed straw hat. A long silver-mounted staff is the mark of their authority. The shepherds, who form a class, wear, in distinction, a woollen apron, made of a black and white check, resembling the *maud* worn by the shepherds of the Scottish borders.

The Catarina Indians in general are the most famous throughout Guatemala for carrying the heaviest burdens on their backs, over the worst of roads, for the longest distances, and in the shortest time. Their products of wool, cotton yarn, grain, potatoes, and a variety of smaller articles, such as pottery, certain tools, &c., are all carried thus to the market of Guatemala. They generally go in bands of thirty or forty, Indian file, dog's trot, with the chief at their head, and each with his long staff, their support and their commonest weapon. Each

INDIANS OF SANTA CATARINA.—WOMAN AND CHILD.

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with nearly two hundred pounds' weight on his back, supported by straps round the forehead, shoulders, and waist, bending forward, they go thirty miles a day, without fatigue and in good time; and no rider has any chance with them in the steep parts of the roads.

The native language of these Indians is called *El Quiché.* I knew only two of them, in Santa Catarina, who understood Spanish. None of their women or men are allowed to intermarry with other Indians or *Ladinos;* and, in case of any *faux pas* with a stranger, the women, formerly, were killed; now the progeny only is destroyed, and, if possible, the father, or mere trespasser. The dress of the women resembles that of all the other tribes of the country, — a long piece of coloured cotton cloth wrapped round the lower part of the body, descending from the waist to half down the calf, and fastened round the waist by a sash. A short and wide chemise covers the bust; and round the head, in distinction from other tribes, they wind an interminable red ribbon, forming a very becoming crown. On the whole they are well-shaped, but their faces are seldom good-looking; unlike those of the men, who, in some cases, have a very superior cast of countenance, full of determination, combined, how-

ever, with cunning. They are all well-built, broad-shouldered, and muscular.

Their religious belief is a curious amalgamation of Paganism and Christianism. They are very devout Catholics, paying their tithes (the prime test) with unequalled punctuality, and adoring, next to God, their priest; but they have not quite deserted the gods of their fathers, and they still sacrifice on the altar of the evil spirit. The christian God has taken the place of their former "good spirit," and they love Him best; but they still fear the "evil one," and, in emergencies, propitiate his angry brow with the blood of a new-born infant!

Amid the recesses of the steepest of their precipices, where a mountain torrent roars and leaps down declivities over bleak rocks, between the shadowy perspective of two seaward-stretching sides of mountains, arises a solitary cone, naked and steep, like a granite column, wearing a desolate, mysterious air about it. A winding path, like a spiral staircase, entwines the rock and ascends to its level top, whereon three or four square masses of a dark colour may be spied with a good glass: they are said to be the altars for immolation!

I had had to give a faithful promise to the *Padre*, in the beginning of my visit, never to attempt to

see anything he did not consider it safe to be seen; and thus was I deterred from making a night's excursion to this most interesting hill. The *Padre* told me that he had as yet not attempted to force this last stronghold of paganism; that it was already well undermined, and would soon fall of itself. How effective was the policy Don Vicente adopted for eradicating idolatry, will be seen from the following.

In talking one day on the subject of bloody sacrifices, he told me that parents either immolate their own offspring or purchase one of the requisite age from other parents, who consider such sacrifice as the most glorious destiny for a child! He told me, at the same time, that he knew their high priest very well, that he was on the best of terms with him, and that he was one of the most zealous attenders of church amongst his flock. To prove his supremacy over this his rival in the hearts of his hermaphrodite-compound of a christian and pagan congregation, he summoned him to come, one afternoon. He appeared humble and respectful, a fellow of a rather unpromising countenance — a cross between a bloodhound and a hyena, but otherwise agreeable, and polite to excess. Don Vicente desired him to go and bring his pontifical robes, as I should like to see them; and the good-natured fellow

departed, and brought them in a bundle, which, with a bow, he laid on the table. We unfolded the bundle, and a long spotless white robe, with red embroidery round the neck, chest, and sleeves, came to light, as also a white cap, in the shape of an antique helmet, embroidered also in red, with a small red cross in front. This anomalous introduction of a christian symbol he assured us was not new; that before the conquest their forefathers had known it. In the peculiar rectangular system of ornament common to Mexican and Central American Indians, it is perhaps not strange that the figure of a cross should have held a prominent place. Whether any meaning, as a symbol, could ever have been attached to this peculiar form I could not learn from him, and I am unable to guess. There were besides these parts of his costume a white sash of cotton for his waist, and a sort of half-towel, half-cloak, that he wore thrown over his left shoulder. He did not bring the holy knife of sacrifice, of the existence of which, however, Don Vicente assured me; but, as he never pressed their compliance beyond a certain point, he refrained on this occasion from asking for it.

On the whole, this was one of the most interesting of spectacles possible to witness — the effects of

INDIAN AND PRIEST OF SANTA CATARINA.

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a system of subjection, the most daring and most complete I ever looked on, effected by a single master-spirit over a mass of unruly sanguinary savages.

Of all the Indians — more than twenty-four thousand in number — their elective chief and magistrate was the most assiduous servant of the *Padre*. A dozen times in the day he was called, or he called of his own accord, to consult about religious, social, or political subjects of consideration.

The *Padre* had also a faithful band of aides-de-camp, as inseparable as the train of a lady of distinction. So soon as the silver bell in his *sanctum sanctorum* intimated his readiness for receiving the announced visitors, they approached the carpeted and dimly lighted chamber. Each of them, in succession, after crossing himself, bent his knee to the *Padre*, who touched his bare head, after which, successively, they withdrew to a respectful distance, and stood, with bended head and crossed arms, saying their say or listening. The head man speaks in *solo* first; each emphatic part of a sentence is taken up by the chorus of his followers, that rises and sinks with the precision of well-taught singers. An answer to a question of the *Padre* is

given in full chorus, with a deeper inclination of the head; and the audience is concluded by a repetition of the ceremony at entrance.

The *Padre* can scarcely stir from his house alone, unless he desire it expressly. If he rides out to Quezaltenango or any part of Guatemala, twenty or thirty Indians trot alongside of his mule. The further he goes the greater the number of his attendants, who pay their own expenses. He often came to Guatemala with a hundred followers; and, during a stay of a month, they would relieve watch, by parties coming and going, and always bringing petitions from the villagers for a speedy return, accompanied with presents of the necessaries of life, and even of money.

On his last visit to Guatemala, he had been summoned by the bishop to answer some charges, brought against him by envious calumny, of the blackest character. There was some talk of suspending him from his duties as a priest. The rumour got abroad, and two hundred of his flock appeared in Guatemala, and went to Carrera and to the bishop, clamouring for their pastor. Both president and bishop assured them that their fears were unfounded, and told the *Padre*, at the same time, to dismiss his children; but his children obstinately

refused to go until all charges had been disproved, and they could carry their *Padre* triumphantly back to their native mountains.

On such occasions all the public of Santa Catarina turns out, and with music, flowers, incense, and singing, comes to meet the returning party two or three leagues from the village. The privileged take the reins of the mule, hold the umbrella over his head, and press around him with anxious and respectful solicitude. I need not add that all that the village produces is constantly pouring in at the store-rooms of the convent kitchen, and some exertion even is needed there to prevent a superfluous influx.

The tithes, something more than one dollar per head per year, are as regularly brought to the *convento* by the people, as if it were they who had to receive the amount there; and they produce an income of more than thirty thousand dollars a year. Of course the largest proportion of it goes to the bishop.

All this was the result of the labour of eighteen years, which, before Don Vicente, no other priest had been able to carry on for more than a few years. They had all very soon given up the work as hopeless, and had fled the dangers that attended

it. To give a just idea of them, I will recount some of Don Vicente's adventures in this arduous undertaking of his.

Don Vicente had been originally a friar of the order of San Francisco, in Guatemala. On the edict of Morazan being proclaimed against the existence of monasteries, he, like most of his brethren, took up the carnal weapons and fought throughout the war against the Federalists. Peace being reestablished by the discomfiture of Morazan, the monasteries recalled all the friars; but Don Vicente divested himself of his monastic vow and became one of the secular clergy. During the succeeding years he distinguished himself by a liberality of opinion, in religious as well as political matters; and by an independence and energy of character, not always rightly appreciated by the higher clerical or lay authorities, who at one time removed the dangerous pastor from a dangerous flock near Guatemala, by a sentence of banishment.

A change in politics amongst the high functionaries of state and church recalled Don Vicente from Chiapas, where he resided during his banishment; and the curacy of Santa Catarina, which nobody had any courage to accept, was intrusted to his care.

He found his flock in a very unpromising condition. His reception by them was anything but gracious. Many a dark countenance scowled upon the white priest from amid a dense crowd, irreverent and turbulent, collected round the *convento*, on the day of his entry into it. Nearly all the Indians who held any influential position hated the idea of seeing a higher authority thrust upon them again. They had thought that the treatment of their former pastors would frighten every one from wishing a repetition, and that thus they would be left to themselves.

Amongst other vicious habits, his congregation had a custom of dancing round the images of saints and stimulating themselves by strong drink, until, overcome by fatigue and drink, they would sink at the feet of the altar, a sacrifice of themselves believed to be exceedingly agreeable to the saint, and thus beneficial to their interests in Heaven. The classes of head men, of all degrees, had the monopoly of supplying the congregation with the necessary stimulants, which, of course, were not always resorted to merely on saint days (*dias de fiesta*), although these are quite numerous enough to enable the people to get drunk about twice a week — a liberal allowance one would think. But they very

soon found these interruptions too irksome, and prepared for each *fiesta* so much before the day of its celebration, and extended the celebration so much after that day, that the only intermissions came to be those produced by mere exhaustion of body and means. There was not a more drunken set amongst the whole Indians of Guatemala, who, nearly all, are zealous votaries of Bacchus. They were also sadly subject to a more deadly thirst — that of blood, which they gratified, as before mentioned, on travellers, or in fights with *matchetes*, amongst themselves. Their head men, too, allowed themselves the most unprincipled liberties with the cattle, goods, servants, wives, and children of their subordinates, and fomented the bitterest hatred between parties of the various families over which they ruled, resulting in the fiercest and bloodiest encounters.

This was the state of things in Santa Catarina, Santa Lucia, and their third village, all of which make but one curacy, and are inhabited by but one distinguished race of Indians.

Don Vicente saw the necessity of commencing with one error at a time, and he commenced with the most glaring and most degrading — that of drunkenness. He struck at it vigorously and fear-

lessly; he proved to them, by their own experience of the consequences, that such sacrifice could not be agreeable to God, and he held up to them the mirror in which they saw all the beastliness, the degradation, of their drunken displays. Many a one felt the truth of it and repented, others felt it and hated the exposure of their foible, and all who drew profit from it vowed dire vengeance against the white reformer. It was resolved to murder the presumptuous intruder, and scatter his bones to the winds.

On a dark night a crowd of sombre figures assembled, noiselessly, on the square before the *convento*. There was no irresolution in their stealthy steps, or in the low whisper of their voices; why do they hesitate? They are only disputing about the pleasure of striking the first blow. As yet their victim slumbers on the other side of the wall, round which the thirst of vengeance divides his life-blood, beforehand, amongst the impatient executioners. The slumber of the *Padre* is suddenly disturbed,—he starts from his couch,—he sees a dark figure at the foot of his bed. "*Que quieres?*" (What wilt thou?) he asks; as answer, the Indian has encircled him with arms of steel and the quickness of lightning. "*Silencio!*" he whispers, "*le*

*vienen á matar*," (Silence, they come to kill you,)—and the *Padre* is carried from his bed, noiselessly, helplessly, and lightly, as if he was but a child in the clasp of a giant.

The Indians outside had not surrounded the *convento*. Was it not sufficient that it stood in the midst of their village, surrounded by their own inaccessible mountains, over which their victim's death-shrieks would echo without hope of his receiving succour or rescue from his white brethren? There was no traitor amongst them; they were all firm and united in inextinguishable hatred against the "white brood of serpents."

They are thus thinking when suddenly the clatter of steel hoofs rattles up the steep causeway that ascends to the road to Quezaltenango. A yell of rage bursts from the assassins: they have recognised, by the faint light of the stars, the milk-white steed of Don Vicente, that flies like a deer, bounding up the steepest terraces, scattering flints and sparks behind it from the echoing rock.

With a long protracted howl of vengeance, the swift-footed mountaineers bound after the fugitive. Well acquainted with all the nearest paths, where crag and cleft serve but as an accelerating stimulant to their elastic bounds, they follow the dim figure

of the white horse gliding up steadily to the highest rim of the mountain-keep.

The noble animal does not need the spur; the voice of his master is enough, "*Anda, mi potro!*" (Forward, my steed!): and forward it rushes, down declivities and up the wall-like hill sides, panting and snorting, but with vigorous bounds. The top is nearly reached; Don Vicente hears no longer the yells of his pursuers; he slackens his speed a little, and—"*Caramba!*" (Confusion!) "here they are!" Two figures jump down upon the road,—they have cut him off! But he brings his horse well under him, bends on his neck, gives a loud cheer, and it jumps with joined hoofs at the two opposing enemies. One is knocked down, and the other, hanging to the bridle-rein, is dragged for some distance, drops, and is kicked over a precipice by a chance salutation of the brave charger. The poor animal bleeds from two deep cuts, one on the head, another on the neck, which the two ruffians had inflicted on receiving its charge; but it heeds not its blood,—the top is reached now, and on the wings of the night wind, it speeds over the table-land, towards Quezaltenango.

The ill success in this attempt of the dominant party amongst the Indians took away a

great deal of the awe with which they had been regarded by the rest. The seed the *Padre* had sown amongst the better-disposed of his flock, during the short period preceding his flight, received, by his preservation, a great impulse towards maturity; and a belief arose in the good of his mission. His enemies were cast down by seeing this proof of their weakness in wreaking vengeance. All Indians are superstitious, and it seemed to them that supernatural powers had warned him of a danger of which they thought he was ignorant. The human angel, who risked his life to preserve that of his pastor, kept his secret; a reaction took place amongst the people, in favour of their talented preacher, and they sent a deputation to recall him—a proceeding to which even his enemies, though sullenly, assented, for there was a shade of fear in them lest a summary vengeance should be taken by the government.

Most likely they saw besides, in his return, but a better chance of a more effective renewal of their sanguinary plans, and so they did not oppose the sympathies of the rest. He returned and renewed his labour of sapping their prejudices, their vices, and their savage habits. His fearless return, his eloquent discourse, his fascinating character, made

a deep impression on the rude but vigorous minds of that portion of this Indian community who suffered most from their head men. A new party, composed of all those who had laboured for the privileged few of their ancient social system, rallied round the promising standard of the Cross, and began to love the man who reared it, and spoke of new hopes, new prospects of an unknown happiness, and even of immediate relief from their social bondage.

Don Vicente now studied and chose, from the little devoted band of those who rallied around him, a few characters, in which he detected strength of will, energy, and gratitude. He kindled in them the first spark of confidence in themselves, to make their influence felt amongst their brethren. He told me that the present head man was an Indian of low descent, a labourer for his richer brethren, in whom he discerned very high qualities of mind and character encased in an extremely athletic body. He mentioned also that when he first spoke to him, and told him that he deserved one day to be head man over his tribe, the poor servant thought he ridiculed him, and was displeased. Now the same man holds absolute authority over more than 24,000 souls — thanks to the exertions of Don

Vicente, who advanced real merit before mere accidental advantage of birth.

The first storm threatening to overthrow the rule of the intruding priest had been allayed; a long calm followed, advantageous for him to extend his influence, and advantageous also for his enemies, who gathered new fuel for their cause from every innovation that revealed the character of the system of their reformer. It needed yet another struggle, before a just estimate of the intrinsic and respective strength of the two parties should be finally established.

On a fine day in the middle of the summer of those mountain valleys, a large crowd of Indians began to assemble on the square before the *convento*, as they usually do when any discussion, social, political, or religious, is required to take place. But that day the attendance was unusually numerous. From every part of the precipitous mountains, long straggling parties were seen winding their way towards the valley, and swelling the crowd on the *plaza* to excess. All the Indians of the three villages seemed stirring: the mountains were alive with them; and Don Vicente stood at a back window of his house, observing with deep thought the masses pouring in from all directions. He knew

that no ordinary occasion caused this assemblage; the people always gave notice to him of such a thing going to take place. His usual attendants had not shown themselves that day, and he felt he had to prepare his energies for some portentous event. He saw nearest his house a knot composed of his bitterest enemies, in agitated discussion; and the respectful distance of the crowd showed the ascendency these former rulers had reacquired, in the silence and calm of the interval of the last few years.

They at once started and walked, all of them, to the house-door, and called for admittance in the usual manner. They entered the room of reception, and Don Vicente stood before them, calm, dignified, and pale as usual, and directing his dark expressive eyes on the chosen ambassadors, who hesitated to make the usual obeisance. At last, with dogged looks they bent their knees before the keen glance of the master spirit. But, in this very humiliation, they seemed to gather strength and hatred to speak of their mission.

The folding-doors of the reception-room opened on one side upon the square; and as they had been left open, Don Vicente could survey, as far as his eye reached, the dark crowd of Indians in their

black jackets, their white head-gear, and all agitated like the billows of a sea; while a hum of voices arose, like the ominous growling approach of a storm.

The address to him commenced in sullen words, that gathered strength and boldness from every expression that verged on irreverence, as they flowed out more and more rapidly. The chorus of the attendants was slightly echoed at first, but it increased, it swelled, it was taken up by the thousands of voices on the *plaza;* it roared, it thundered in the echoes of the valley, until it became but a chaos of menace, yells, howls of defiance, outdoing one another in strength and wildness. What was the subject of their demand, which was enforced by threats of instantaneous bloodshed? They wanted a renewal of their old dances and orgies, no interference in their social affairs; they wanted to beat their women, violate one another's daughters, and spill the blood of one another without being questioned about it. "Accede to this or leave!" cried the most moderate amongst them; and "Accede to this or die!" howled the fanatic part. A general shout that drowned the hearing of the *Padre's* first attempt to speak was set up of a sudden,—one unanimous cry of "*matalo!*" (kill him!).

There was a little open space of some elevation between the deputation of blood-hounds and the general mass; to this spot Don Vicente flew with bare head, his eyes sparkling with a divine energy, and his pale features expressive of the glorious determination of a martyr.

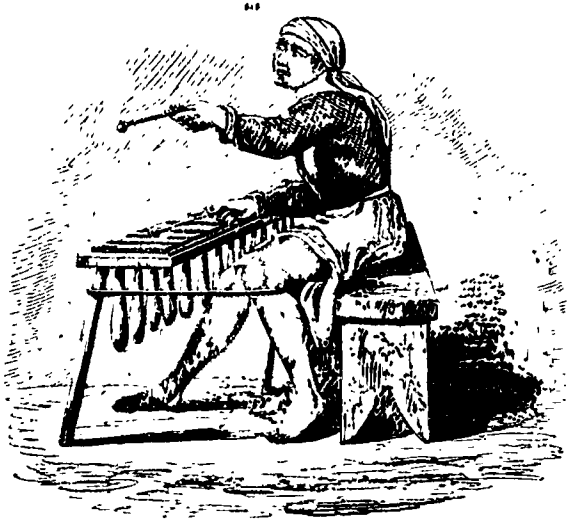
"Here! here! my children — here! strike at the breast of your father!" Thus he spoke, tearing open his priestly robe and shirt, and offering his naked breast to the multitude. "You want my life," he continued; "take it. It never was devoted to anything but your benefit; if my death will make you better; come — tarry not. I will gladly die for you!" There he stood with exposed breast, looking at them with eyes full of inspiration—a divine and glorious courage, and with a smile around his lips. The crowds drew back; they backed towards one another like affrighted children seeing something supernatural—their countenances assumed a rigid look of stupefaction: the *Padre's* arch-enemies behind him in the room slid out one by one, edging in at the remotest openings in the crowd, silent and with their heads bent down. A moment of mysterious silence had fallen on the thousands of raving Indians; a moment in which the last struggle between the spiritual and the brutal power wrestled

in their hearts. The next instant the *Padre* folded his arms over his breast, bent his head, and loud and solemnly exclaimed — "Ave Maria!" The multitude sank as by magic on their knees, and echoed — "*En gracia recibida.*" He had conquered! his enemies lay prostrate before his feet, beating their heads against the dust, from which they never raised them again — *in rebellion.*

Among the peculiar habits of these Indians, it is curious to observe the merciless way in which they administer justice among themselves. Trespasses of any kind, of man or woman, against the laws of their community are punished, without any distinction of sex or age, by whipping. They have in an open square a tall whipping-post, to which the unfortunate individual is drawn up with a rope round his hands, until his toes just touch the ground, and then a hard and stiff cowhide is laid vigorously on his or her bare back. It is a disgusting sight, and I tried, only once, to witness it in a case of petty theft, a rare thing amongst them; but I had to leave the ground to avoid making a scene.

They are still very fond of dancing, and are very good musicians, performing on a peculiar instrument, a native invention of antique date, the *Marimba.* A long horizontal stick supports a

number of "jicaras" (or long cylindrical calabashes), arranged near one another, according to size, from two feet in depth to four or three inches. Over the mouth of each of them is drawn a thin piece of bladder, and, over it, at the distance of a quarter of an inch, are flat pieces of a very hard wood, arranged like the claviature of a piano.



These oblong pieces of wood are supported on a frame of light wood joined to the long stick that supports the row of "jicaras" underneath. Two light legs sustain the little piano, partly on the ground, and a hoop connects it with the player, who sits within the hoop pressing it on a bench.

Two long drumsticks, with balls of Indian rubber at their heads, are in the hands of the player, who strikes double notes at every touch of the wooden claviature with the resounding jicaras underneath. The sound of this instrument is charming, clear, limpid in its tones like the intonation of a harp-string of wire. The Indians produce the justest and sweetest double notes, and blend a rattling tune together in very harmonious chords. Their talent for playing this instrument, by ear, is astonishing; in a day they will pick up the most difficult air, and play it with a good deal of expression, accompanied with a chant of their own composition. I taught one of them some of the sweetest airs of Bellini, and some other traveller may be astonished on hearing, amid those mountains, the delights of those of Italy.

This Indian community acknowledges, to a certain degree, the supremacy of the Government of Guatemala. The head-men and alcaldes are subjected, nominally, to the "*Gobernador de los Altos*," who resides in Totonicapan. He never, however, troubles them much with visits, and shuts an eye on their independent inclinations, if they only keep quiet and pay a little of the contributions the Government collects, in the way of a capitation-tax. They are exempt from military service; at least, nobody has as yet dared to go there to enlist.

In all their internal affairs, even to the jurisdiction of life and death, they are governed by their priest, head-men, and Don Vicente. They all cultivate the soil, and I presume it to be held in common, that is unowned, excepting in so far as each family cultivates the same portion continuously. So far as I observed, the only portion of the community that forms a class are the shepherds, who wear an apron, as has been said, in distinction, and are numerous, having to take charge of numerous flocks of sheep. But they attend also to their own agricultural operations.

Don Vicente has done a great deal towards ameliorating the disposition of the Indians towards the Government; for which it, most ungratefully, never returned him thanks; on the contrary, it would, perhaps, be glad if the Indians would murder the "liberal priest," of which, of course, there is but a small chance. Formerly, the jurisdiction of life and death was in the hands of the head-men. Don Vicente has slowly taken it from them, and has influenced them to have recourse to a higher tribunal, which, of course, is not complied with, as yet, in all cases. The last time that a case of that nature (trial for murder) happened, the Indians agreed to hand the delin-

quent over to the justice of Totonicapan. On the way to that town, the prisoner committed suicide, by jumping down a precipice.

I was told by Don Vicente that suicide, and in that peculiar manner, was a very frequent occurrence amongst the men and the women also; that grief, anger, despair will cause them to go to the most frightful precipices, and end their sorrows in a bold jump into the depths below. The only tribe of Indians in America among whom I know of the same practice existing is that of the Indians of Mosquito, and there amongst the women only, who prefer hanging themselves to any other method of abrogating one's life and troubles.

The household of Don Vicente was composed of servants of *Ladino* blood. He kept a secretary, a Ladino also; but that is the whole extent to which the Indians allow any stranger to be amongst them. Even those would not be allowed to settle permanently in the country, although the *Padre* has been trying to influence their dispositions to that purpose; but he had not achieved much as yet.

Passengers who merely stay a night are not taken notice of, except that they are confined to the strangers' house built by the *Padre*. And, as the roads to Santa Catarina are so exceedingly bad, they are but seldom made use of. My stay of more

than a month was, of course, a matter of great curiosity to them, and my steps were watched by a hundred eyes. In spite of that, I managed to make a goodly collection of outline sketches, which I improved on with closed doors and windows. Had they known that I carried the portrait of their beloved valley away with me, I should have had to fight for it; for their jealousy knows no bounds.

One day they came in a deputation to the *Padre* to ask him what I was doing there so long. Don Vicente thundered at their suspicious natures, and showed them a plan which I had made for him, of a new building for the "*convento*." "This," he said,—"this is the thing that was laboured at with closed doors, a work that will add to the credit of your native village, and you, blockheads, must, of course, suspect something wrong!" They felt exceedingly small, and left with the deepest humility.

Water being in that valley, in certain seasons, a commodity rather difficult to get at from the village, as the descent to the river is a work of good three hours, I suppose that this inconvenience for frequent bathing must have been the source of a peculiar custom of the people, said to be as ancient as their tribe. This is the use of hot-bath houses. Every house has next to it, one of them, in the shape of

an oven, built of sun-bricks or round stones. It has no opening but a low door near the ground, big enough to allow a person to creep into it. The interior is heated by means of hot stones. A bowl of water is put in, the naked bather hocks on the ground, and the door is closed upon him. The heat evaporates the water in the bowl, and, surrounding the body with an atmosphere of warm moisture, accelerates the process of perspiration, that soon streams down the skin like rain. When the bather feels himself thoroughly soaked, he comes forth, rubs himself dry, and is thus well bathed. In the Sierra Nevada, in California, I have seen similar huts, built of reeds and earth, for a similar purpose, but only used by the Indians there in cases of venereal disease.

My time for returning to Guatemala approached at last, and I had to take leave of my host. The extraordinary character of this man was of that order that raises one's estimation of it higher and higher, the nearer one is drawn to it by the bonds of intimacy. Every day a new and interesting feature in his comprehensive faculties developed itself, and it was thus with sincere regret that I had to leave one of the most grateful of all studies, the reading of a great mind opening under the influence of friendship.

I could say much more of the vastness of the noble aspirations that filled that man's breast; but circumstances of a peculiar nature prohibit enlarging on this interesting theme.

The higher circles of Guatemalan society are imbued with a degree of refinement one would scarcely expect to meet with in such an out-of-the-way place. A considerable number of ancient Spanish families, of pure European blood, keep up a certain "ton," to which even the lower circles of society aspire, with more or less success. As I said before, music is enthusiastically admired, and some very excellent native teachers refine and elevate natural taste and talent. There was amongst these teachers a guitar player, Don Francisco Garrido, who, if he would come to Europe, would have immense success in showing people what genius can do and make of so imperfect an instrument as the guitar. There were some other very good teachers, one who had studied music in Paris, and one who composed the most tuneful little songs, full of soul and sweetness ("La Rosa secca," his best). Unfortunately, like many another genius, he liked "the bowl," whereby he had lost caste, character, and health.

Music, dancing, and witty chat helped us, many

a time, to forget that night is the hour for sleep, and the rosy dawn, instead of the moon, saw us home on a morning. There was a singularly gifted young lady who formed the centre of a witty coterie at that time. Amongst other talents she possessed was that of painting, in oil, portraits of the living, or of the departed saints, heroes, or heroines. She had scarcely ever received much instruction; a German painter once assisted her in her studies, but only for a short time previously to his departure. All that she produced was due to her native talent. Her paintings had, of course, many glaring faults; but genius was legible in every one of them. A most amiable, unassuming disposition made her society a treat to every one that came in contact with her. Her face was not as brilliant as her mind, but the latter shone so fully from her expressive eyes, that, absorbed by the contemplation of it, every one soon forgot to ask himself, "Is she good-looking or not?" A cousin of hers supplied all the wants of outward beauty for the pair of them, who inseparable, arm in arm, seemed but an amalgamation of dazzling attractions. Often have I looked with admiration at the two cousins, when they were engaged talking with a third party. The elder, a noble figure, full of Spanish *grandezza*, the face amiable, the eyes animated, wit flowing from

her lips; and leaning against her, the younger, a fairy little figure, timid, loving, an ardent and bashful soul pulsating in cheek and eyes, winning admiration with an artless blush or a modest glance of her large dark eyes. They were the noble lily and the moss rose-bud intertwined, a delightful union of perfume, beauty, and worth.

Besides the immaculate circles of society, existed others with the same pretensions but not the same merit,—bad copies of good originals. Beyond them there were some of less pretensions, and consequently more successfully balanced in expectation and fulfilment, including in their *at homes* a good deal of the learned professions, who, of course, had also access to the highest circles.

Beyond the pales of all those, there existed another circle of a peculiar character indigenous only perhaps to Guatemala. You may find there education, wit, learning even, and wine and beauty, "à discrétion." Here all the young men of the educated classes sow their wild oats, and exchange, in intoxicating pleasures, so much of their constitutions for a sorry modicum of worldly experience. The nucleus of this school for inexperienced youth was a family of long descent, and some influence from former respectability. A matron of many years' standing as a beauty, in spite of the ravages

of time and pleasure, presided, unshaken by calumny, public opinion, and adversity of fortune, and held in her hands the sibylline book of all the histories of the present and past youth of Guatemala and its vicinity, and of sojourning strangers of various nations.

It would be a great mistake to class this small circle of Guatemalan society with any other somewhat similar in any other part of the world, for none could excel it in respectability of appearance and in the imminence of danger attending the frequentation of it. This is no secret to any one in Guatemala, but many people go there thinking themselves safe from the very knowledge of the danger, an error common to self-conceit, of which I have known some victims, who imparted to me this knowledge *gratis!*

I believe it was in the month of August that news came from the state of San Salvador, that the capital of the same name had been destroyed by an earthquake. All the wealthier inhabitants had left the ruins, and this desertion had, as a natural consequence, produced great distress amongst the poorer classes. The latter very soon returned to the site of their ruined hovels, and dug amongst the fragments of their former homes for a new

place of refuge. The seat of the Government had been removed in the meantime to Cojutepec, which I visited some time after.

Shortly after the receipt of these disastrous news, I paid a visit to La Antigua, the former capital of Guatemala. An earthquake had destroyed this city, during the height of its bloom in commerce and in the pursuit of the arts, fostered by the generous fertility of a young country, teeming with riches, both vegetable and mineral, containing a numerous population of submissive aboriginals, capable of and willing to work. This was in the early days of the captainship of Guatemala, in the time when the sun never set on the glorious empire of Spain, long, long ago.

La Antigua still contains numerous houses dating their re-establishment from that disastrous event that rent their former walls asunder, and shook their roofs, floors, and binding walls down into confused heaps in the middle of their inner courtyards. Some of the old outer walls remained standing; some even with comparatively little injury, and their noble resistance to the terrible element recalled their grateful inhabitants to the hearths of their fathers, with the penates of their family. Most of these houses are two and

three storied, showing in their architecture the taste and the wealth of their former possessors. Amongst these venerable patriarchs of houses, which are particularly and numerously congregated around the old *plaza*, are interspersed more modern one-storied buildings, some of them very decent in style, arrangement, and furniture, belonging to some "haciendados" (proprietors) of *grana* (cochineal) plantations. These plantations are particularly numerous around "La Antigua," and their proprietors were very wealthy once, when the prices were better, and less unfavourable weather interfered with the harvest of the little inhabitants of the cactus. This change has, of course, been felt throughout the country; the present export of cochineal is not one-third of what it used to be.

The lower classes suffer a great deal from this; for all hands, of men, women, girls, and boys, used to be employed to tend these interesting insects, the modern source of the imperial "*purpurea*," to transport them from leaf to leaf of the cactus, to separate male from female at certain times during the season, and bring them together again in the right time; a tedious task that, as it refers to millions, ay, billions, of tiny creatures, sticking, in minute piles, of a cottony-looking substance, on the prickly

surface of the labyrinthic broad leaves and branches of the cactus, and of such fragile consistency that the least awkwardness in handling them ruptures their skin and sheds their purple blood.

There was a time, as I said, when the heavens smiled annually on this harvest; but, for many years, there has not been a favourable one, and it seems that the climate has changed; for all those other causes, such as revolutions, frequent wars, &c., which, in the aggregate, at one time, destroyed, the cochineal commerce, have subsided long ago, and there has been time enough to ameliorate that fallen condition. But Nature apparently has frowned on this traffic, and all that man can do has been done, and done in vain, to revive its bloom. The chief among those who did the most to bring back the commerce, and to improve the general condition of Guatemala, so as to make it worthy of holding its rank among civilised communities; the one who brought about also the unexpected conclusion of a bloody and ruinous war; the one who showed Carrera (for the salvation of his country) the way to power, and, by his talents and sound judgment, bore him onward in his career of success, — that individual was an Englishman — Chatfield, the former consul-general for Central America! He

had departed before I arrived in Guatemala, and I never saw him elsewhere; but his reputation met me in every circle of society. Much ill-will and calumny was also heaped on the powerful meddling of a foreigner, and many of the North American papers became frequently rabid on the subject; but the sources whence those calumnies issued were such as to enable me to form my own estimate as to their truth and value.

My friend Mr. W—— and I were still continuing our stay in Guatemala, and in the hotel of our countryman, where a warmth of kindness and consideration made us quite at home. I passed my idle time in perpetrating bad portraits on the natives, and did not spare even my countrymen. My host, Mr. R. Henz, was among the first victims, and he was hung up in the principal room of the establishment, as a warning to all who should "trespass on those preserves" of a merciless and rough-dealing caricaturist, glad of any recreation from the tedium of Guatemalan life, during the delay of remittances. Thus we passed our time, with some painting and much music, at balls and musical picnics, in the most charming of rural scenes; in the meantime feeding up the worthy companions of our adventures, our noble steeds, till they panted

and pawed for a trial of their renewed mettle. My *schimmel*, in particular, made quite a figure in the *paseo* of Guatemala, on afternoons. The polite and graceful action by which, in passing, he expressed his regard for well-dressed ladies, on foot or in carriage, created quite a sensation.

Thus life passes, while the heart blooms, and reason does not look too earnestly into the purpose of one's existence. But the calls upon one's serious consideration of what we live for never fail to make themselves heard, and they are apt to sound most portentously in the ear when the din of light and unprofitable enjoyment surrounds us, and forms an impressive contrast to one's better feelings, as regards the duties of a man's life.

In the public dining-room of the hotel, a French tailor (in Guatemala, a gentleman) generally took upon himself the duties of entertaining the company, at the expense of his small credit for intellect, at least, in comparison with the multiform wit he elicited from his soup-eating associates, who, while discussing the massive piles of eatables on the board, exhausted also their supplies of logic and satire on this most impenetrable of butts.

There is nothing like a clatter of tongues to drown the clatter of knife and fork, and I don't at

all relish the solemn silence in which nought but the clang of steel on porcelain is heard, and nought seen save awing countenances bent with grim determination over doomed and bleeding masses of meat. There is nothing that makes the material food go down more glibly than a good and liberal outpouring of nonsense, crowned with a hearty laugh, at other people's and one's own expense. *Vive la bagatelle!* above all, *in a hotel!*

Under such auspices were we sitting, one day, and making our host think seriously about the prices of "beef and greens." The French tailor, like Tam O'Shanter, was "glorious" that day, recounting all the transgressions of taste, male or female, that had just come under his observation in his department, when, of a sudden, somebody — shook the table; no!—the walls shook also, the ceiling; the mighty beams supporting it groaned and twisted about, as if their vitals were under the influence of cholic. The company stared at one another; but scarcely a face looked funny enough to warrant the impeachment of any one having played any trick upon the diners. Another heave, and everything movable, and what we might have thought before immovable, swayed about: a creaking, a rattling, and a subterraneous growl, upset

the equilibrium of everything, and, above all, that of the bipeds, of most of them at least, for away they rushed, pellmell, into the court-yard, leaving the poor pudding standing smoking in the middle of the table. A few old stagers remained, fascinated, apparently, by the attraction of the smoking good cheer, and shamming as much cheer of their own as they could conscientiously make pretence to. This encouraged some of us to attempt also keeping up appearances, and so, with a sort of sea-sick feeling, and more sickly smiles, we revenged ourselves on the pudding, by dissecting and embowelling it, though choking with our mouths full.

We had just recovered ourselves sufficiently to swallow like Christians: the fugitives were returning, and reassuming their greedy looks in regard to pudding and dessert, when another unmitigated subterranean kick stopped every morsel in our throats. This was no laughing matter; we all felt exceedingly sick; we could not keep our positions on the chairs, but had to hold on to walls, doors, and window-frames, that had as much need of support as we had.

The rocking of everything was accompanied by the same faint, subterraneous growl as the first time, only more prolonged and perhaps fainter, and

thus more suggestive of imaginary phantoms of horror. We had to evacuate the garrison; the old roofs of the building shed their tiles, like an old crow ruffling its dusky feathers, and everything nodded portentously.

We waited for some time in the spacious court-yard, to see an end of this spectacle; we dodged tiles, and kept the most centralised position possible, but we got tired at last, and resolved to take a walk. We sallied into the streets, and there we were soon imbued with the terrible seriousness of an earthquake.

From all the houses, most of the inhabitants had come forth to the most spacious places, where two streets crossed one another, or a little square or open place enabled them to remove, as far as possible, from the tottering houses. There they were, on their knees, pale and despairing, praying earnestly, some loud, some low, and here and there a heart-rending yell of "*Misericordia, Domine!*" would be echoed by a hundred faltering tongues.

There is nothing so infectious as general opinion, where the general opinion is that of extreme danger, consequently, the vulgar upshot of it, fear, showed its impress in the pale faces and trembling limbs one met in all parts of the streets. Be it understood,

however, that this refers more to the lower classes and to the most weak of the higher; for I have seen a great number of the better families undergoing this ordeal of danger with the most heroic equanimity of mind. And amongst them, the fair sex was not always the one that flew into the arms of protection. I have seen them extending their support, their equanimity, to those who, at other times, rule over them.

I was delighted, on the whole, with the superior spirit of courage that showed itself, during the fourteen succeeding days of earthquakes in Guatemala. There was much fear, but not without reason. Salvador had just sunk into ruins; Guatemala might share its fate and that of its own predecessor, La Antigua. On the whole, the more educated, and the stronger amongst those without education, took the affair very coolly; in a very different manner from what would have been the case in Mexico. It is a terrible strain upon one's mind, to remain for fourteen days and nights over an ignited volcano, that every fifteen minutes reminds you of its power. It is nothing during the day; you see the danger, and the danger is soon past; but at night, when you ought to be asleep, and composing your excited nerves, but dare not

do so, because you don't know whether, if you were, you should ever awake, or, at the best, awake to anything but a living grave, under an immovable mass of ruins. It is in circumstances of this sort that one needs what is commonly called "pluck." A semblance of this may, however, be gained by seeing a danger frequently; one thus becomes careless about it; for nothing is so tiresomely provoking as to be repeatedly frightened by the same thing: you become, at last, sulky, and let things take their course.

We used to have our beds brought out into the corridor, towards the inner court-yard, for doors, during the working of a wall, may become jammed at the time you want to open them, to save your head.

The greatest portion of the community, vulgar and gentle, had taken up their night-lodgings in the largest squares, in *tienda de campaña*, or tents, of promiscuous materials. Those who could find no room on the squares, slept in the middle of the broadest streets, side by side, rank and file, like a slumbering Roman army. Those best to do in this world, and most afraid of the next, left the town altogether, and went, with kith and kin, into the country, where wooden houses, of elastic propen-

sities, made the danger of being squeezed to death less imminent.

Most business, of course, was dispensed with during this time, and people went constantly to see whether their friends were as afraid as themselves, and to find consolation in sympathy, and in scouting at those who pretended to underrate the danger. It was very amusing to see parties of young men making the round of their encamped acquaintances, having fortified their nerves with large doses of Dutch courage, swaggering about their unshakeable souls, until some short jerk of the choleric ground would send them about their business — that of holding their tongues.

On the whole, the protracted trembling did not occasion the amount of damage that might have been expected; but all the houses are built on the principle of resisting earthquakes, low-storied, with broad bases, stretching, with an open square inside, over a good deal of enclosed ground, the woodwork strongly braced, the walls thick, mostly *adobe* (sun-dried bricks), or of a light and cohesive freestone. Some old houses fell, a few walls were rent asunder, some steeples split, some old ones fell down, and the streets were strewn with tiles, and fragments of

ornamental architecture, that had been placed too far above the centre of gravity.

It was a curious sight to stand at the top of some of the inclined streets, and watch the perspective of it, under a shock. You could see the movement coming, like a wave, rolling and swaying onward, uphill. The movement was not ubiquitous; it advanced slowly, from the lower part of the town; the houses saluting their *vis-à-vis*, the steeples shaking their heads, all amid deep silence, and the clear azure sky smiling mercilessly overhead on the contortions of the earth. This contrast, of serenity above, and appalling misery below, imbued the heart with a feeling of hopelessness in the abating of wrath and the expectation of compassion.

There were two distinct actions of the earth-shocks perceptible: one vertical, the other horizontal, parallel with the surface; the latter was the more terrible, and told plainly every time by an increased shower of tiles and additional rents in the walls.

I believe there is but one other danger that equals that of an earthquake in its appalling effects on the mind; that is, a fire at sea. I never experienced the latter, — perhaps the only one that has

been left out in my catalogue of horrors, — but I am quite satisfied with the impression of an earnest earth-shock, and think that the frequent repetition of it, during fourteen days and nights, sufficiently answers the purpose of testing one's nerves.

The shocks came to an end at last; the old volcano, Del Agua, who never changed countenance during the whole proceedings, and looked extremely calm and complacent at the twitching of the plain at his feet, the old vagabond seemed, at last, to feel ashamed; that is to say, he hid his face with a cloudy handkerchief, and pulled a cloud-cowl over his head, disconcerted, no doubt, at the unsatisfactory effects of his kicks under the table-land.

Cheerfulness of feeling being thus re-established, the general routine of pleasures, dancing and musical parties, and, above all, picnics — musical and real picnics, with people that know how to sit on the grass and to behave in the open air, — all these enjoyments were resumed, and the laugh and the smile of people became no longer either forced or hollow.

The season of the *fiestas* of approaching Christmas just began to be prepared for when we made up our minds to leave. Of all times in the year Christmas reminds me most of my native land; of

all that is dear in the reminiscences of childhood; and, instead of being cheered by its festivities in a foreign country, they have on me quite the opposite effect. We Germans will be sentimental; we cannot help making fools of ourselves at some season of the year, and we try to make up for it in the rest by being sceptical, and imitating the limping Mephistopheles, in the most limping manner imaginable.

Just before I left, a little incident happened that may give people an idea of transactions between young men of different opinions in Guatemala. We were sitting, one evening, over our chess and beer, in the assembly-room of the old "inn of mine host," when a sudden cry of "*Porque me tires?*" ("Why do you shoot at or strike at me?") came from the street; and, in the same moment nearly, the street door was burst open, and my name was shouted by a voice I recognised to be that of one of the two brother conspirators, Ramon, my sworn companion, of arms. He rushed into the room up to me, saying, "*Me dieròn un pistoletazo*" ("Some one has given me a pistol shot").

He was unarmed; I handed him a dagger, took my sword, and away we flew up the street, after the individual. We came too late, the watchmen had

arrested the delinquent. We went to see him lodged in the guard-room; the guards kept us at a distance, and the individual, an intimate friend of Ramon, a son of one of the first families of Guatemala, dodged behind the guards, crying, "*No me tires, Ramon,*" ("Don't shoot me, Ramon,") although we had no such intention. We next went to a doctor, and saw on the breast of Ramon, right over the heart, a large contusion, with the epidermis slightly lacerated. It seems that the double folds of a thick cloak of cloth had resisted the shot from a pistol put close to his breast. The cloak was a little singed on the outside, but there was no hole in the successive folds.

"And for what — all this?" — the European will ask. His friend had met him at the corner of our inn, had said good evening in the friendliest manner, had made a few trifling remarks, drawn a pistol and fired at him! Without saying a syllable why he did it, he turned on his heel and fled, and Ramon rushed into our house for a weapon. People said that madness was the cause of this act. I doubt it; the most trifling, perhaps a long-forgotten injury, may have been the cause, for there are characters in that country who will harbour the thought of revenge for years, and when they belong to the

ruling party, to an influential family, they don't hesitate to take the most wanton and unscrupulous mode of revenging themselves.

The assassin showed a great deal of remorse during the two following days, and, on the evening of the second day, in an honourable access of that feeling, he stabbed himself. The wound he inflicted, with a saddler's knife, lying in the guard-room, was not productive of immediate death; but it brought on a lingering and exceedingly painful state of a slow transition from life to death. When I left Guatemala he had not yet died.

There was a sort of show of justice going to deal equitably between Ramon and his unsuccessful assassin; but people in Guatemala find it extremely difficult to balance, nicely, the merits of a former conspirator with those of the son of *an acting minister of finance.*

On the subject of the comparative worth of the two nations, Mexicans and Guatemalans, there is no doubt that the latter have more strength of character as men. In Mexico, such a case of a man committing suicide for anything, be it love, despair, remorse, slighted ambition, or even madness, such a case is not known there; people there never go to these extremes. However modest their

opinion of themselves may be, they have too great a regard for the entireness of their own pretty persons to introduce such obnoxious matters as steel and lead into their system.

I don't advocate suicide; but, if my opinion were asked whether a worthless fellow should be allowed to rid us of his existence or not, I would say, "By all means, let him do so;" and I would, moreover, erect a monument to his memory as a man that did one worthy act in his life — that of having, at the last moment, shown some regard for public opinion. Let a suicide be called a coward, *but I know* that amongst a nation of cowards I never found a suicide.

In Guatemala, numerous cases of suicide, mostly of men, and mostly produced by despair in love, were in people's recollection for the last fifteen years.

On the 24th of December, our horses, rampant with ardour, were led out, our saddle-bags and blankets put upon them; the old sabre was buckled on once more, the holsters put to the saddle, the pistols capped, the girth was tightened, we mounted, and away went the cavalcade of a mounted band, of about twenty friends and acquaintances, giving us

their company half way on the first day's journey, a kindly, but injudicious custom.

We drank the *Doch-an-dorish* on the first of the mountains that enclose Guatemala, towards Sonsonate; we shook hands, perhaps, for the last time, with men we had become intimate with, and turned from them, to see them, perhaps, no more in life. This is the curse that clings to the life of the rover.

## CHAP. XI.

### SAN SALVADOR.

A Thief set to catch Thieves.—Splendid Sight of an active Volcano.—And the more splendid of a human One.—Indian Proprietary.—Shaking a White Man's Hand.—A medical Münchausen.—Jolly Companions, good Roads, &c.—Ruins of San Salvador.—Cojutepec and San Vicente.—Contrasts of Scenery —San Miguel.—The old Pacific in Fonseca Bay.—Beauty and Diversity of Scenery.—Bustling Merchants and lazy Soldiers.—Heroism of Squier.—Yankees beat by *Vis Inertiæ*.—Fooleries of a drunken Captain.—Prospect of parting with my Steed.—Accomplishment of it.

Our first day's journey was as far as Corral de Piedra, a little village. The next day, the road ascended terraces more mountainous, wooded, and picturesque. But I suppose the reader will be pretty much satiated, by this time, with reading of crags, precipices, rivers, and woods. It is, generally, more interesting to see them than to read of them in written descriptions, in which it is so difficult to avoid repetition, and to bring out the cha-

racteristic points that constitute the variety of outline and general aspect.

We stopped, the second night, at a little village, south of Santa Anna, a considerable town of Salvador. Some of my Guatemalan friends had recommended me to take that southern road, and stop at the house of the *alcalde*, in the aforementioned village. That place has the reputation of harbouring the greatest number of horse-thieves in all Salvador. Our host himself was said to be a reformed one, and from having been one of the most famous "gentlemen of the road," he was now transformed into as famous an oppressor of his former associates.

The third night, we stopped at the southern bank of a wide-spreading ravine, where a river rushes through its broad bottom, and forms the boundary between Guatemala and Salvador in that part. A few houses on the top of the elevated mountain-slope of the left bank gave us shelter for the night.

The fourth day we reached a mass of peaks and ravines, slopes and abysses, confused and intricate, with the towering Volcano of Izalco rising from amongst them. The population in that neighbour-

hood is almost purely Indian, with very little intermixture of the blood of *Ladinos*. In the house of a maid of the latter race, we passed that night. From the verandah before the little shanty of our night-quarters we looked, at night, toward the black forms of the peaks, where a darkened fire burnt steadily from the crater of the Volcano of Izalco. Now and then, a more playful movement would light up the dark heavens, and liquid masses of fire would seem creeping down the hill like fiery serpents. It is a grand spectacle, the sight of an active volcano; it seems like an outlet from that mysterious inner world from which the subterranean spirit of fire comes to look forth over the outer world, fierce in aspect, and threatening to the gentler beauties of the freer atmosphere, that shrinks from contact with the fiery monster. The red tongues of flame on the crater seemed to lick the night-sky, now playfully and gently, and now fiercely and ravenously. I saw the reflection of that dark light in two even darker and more fiery orbs, that contemplated, with me, the glowing beacon,—the eyes of my hostess, a subject about as worthy of admiration as the volcano. Here, too, there were the alternate movements of gentle playfulness,

and of fiery ravening, that actuated an undulating bust, which seemed to contain an equal accumulation of volcanic propensities. She was a splendid young woman to contemplate, but Heaven help the man who would undertake to be domiciled with her for life! he might as well have built his house on the edge of the crater of Izalco.

On the morning of the 28th of December we reached Sonsonate, the third town in rank in the state of Salvador. A spacious and well-conducted *meson* received us, and, amongst other recreations, afforded us means to divest ourselves of the terrible coating of dust that had clung to us for the last three days.

Sonsonate is one of the prettiest little towns of Central America. At the foot of the Volcano of Izalco, its streets rise amphitheatrically from a fertile plain, that stretches to the Pacific, distant about eighteen miles. All the nearest vicinity of Sonsonate teems with luxuriant vegetation; fruits of all kind, and abundance of cattle. Living, (as people will call eating, drinking, and sleeping,) is exceedingly cheap in Sonsonate; money is scarce, and a sixpence goes a far way with the initiated. The cultivation of tobacco and the collection of Peruvian balsam form the two main springs of the commerce

of that neighbourhood. There are entire forests of trees containing the balsam; but let nobody imagine that he needs but to go there and set people to work upon them: there is not a tree that has not an invisible owner, that, at the time of your tapping it, would appear, machete in hand, asking you "what the dickens" you meant by going into his *jardin* (garden), *alias* an entangled, boggy, and intricate virgin forest, where one would rather feel inclined to appeal to the monkeys for directions and information than to men, and particularly owners of land. But thus it is the native, aboriginal, Indian population, keeps this branch of commerce (at least the gathering of the produce) in its own hands; and to each family a certain number of trees are assigned for their benefit, and nobody else can be permitted to claim a share in this distribution. Consequently the *Ladinos*, superior beings as they imagine themselves, refrain from gathering the balsam directly; but they entrap both balsam and owner, so soon as he comes to town with his produce, at certain seasons of the year.

No Indian goes to any new merchant; he sticks to his first acquaintance, if he be not fleeced too mercilessly; therefore, it is amusing to see the tricks employed to procure Indian connexion, the fail-

ures and occasional success. The Indian, generally, exchanges the greater part of his balsam for goods and a little cash; the former, for the family necessaries, such as millinery ware, especially ribbands (for which wife and daughters both insist), a knife, an axe, a machete, shirts, a blanket for himself, and the "balance" is employed in procuring that dearest of all enjoyments, spending your money foolishly, and getting laughed at for your pains, an enjoyment common to both savage and civilised beings.

I had the pleasure of getting acquainted at Sonsonate with the British consul, Mr. F.——, who also intended, at the time, to make a trip, on official business, across Salvador, as far as its southern extremity, La Union, a harbour in the famous bay of Fonseca.

Nobody, in Europe, knows what it means to shake a white man's hand, in those countries; and no one can, therefore, rightly appreciate the feeling that prompts one to record the meeting *with such a man*, as my new friend, and to speak of his kindness; two things prized above all, where there is a great want of them, at least of that kind that would bear the closest and most fastidious scrutiny.

Two delightful evenings, with the consul and his amiable wife, were all that my time and the consul's

could allow before we proceeded together on our journey. Besides the consul, there was another English resident there, at least one that claimed the protection of the British flag, a Frenchman; a doctor, six feet high, and more than twenty or thirty years from Europe; — a kind, hospitable fellow; but he laboured under the disadvantage and misfortune of having had the most astonishing adventures, in the most astonishing numbers, so that the generality of the public, who had not seen anything very far beyond their noses, like most people, took, at times, the daring liberty of doubting the truth of the descriptive portions of the doctor's statements: behind his back, of course; for no person could have delighted him more than by "treading on his coat-tail," at least, so said the native population, many of whom had been variously flagellated by him. I am inclined to believe, however, that these doubts were pretended — pure envy; for the doctor was accumulating a nice fortune.

Our party had swelled to the number of four gentlemen on the day of starting. My friend, Mr. W——, took leave of me, and went by sea to Costa Rica, where we intended to meet again. Two friends of Mr. F——, Spanish gentlemen, one an

Andalusian, and the other a Catalonian, both most agreeable companions, joined us with their servants, making, in all, a cavalcade of seven, four gentles ahead, and three commoners in the rear, bearing on their mules those charming saddle-bags, replete with all sorts of materials for impromptu picnics.

It was in quite a luxurious way we travelled; something very different from my former more Spartanic style: but I believe in Alcibiades' opinion, in respect to the Athenic and Spartanic modes of life; and I enjoyed the former, without feeling a great shock in the principles of the latter.

This journey was certainly one of the pleasantest rides, in its way, I ever had: three jolly companions, fine scenery, good roads, fine weather, fine spirits, wit and humour, song and laughter, cheered us all the way. We started on the evening of the first day, and rode, by moonlight, nearly until morning. We ascended the slopes of the Volcano of Izalco, whose crater illuminated part of our way; we passed the village of Izalco, on the top of the slope, with a population purely Indian, all fast asleep, during our passage.

Mr. F—— told me there of discoveries of subterranean buildings, made in an accidental excavation on the mountain-side. They have, according to him, all the appearance of great antiquity. But

one had been found up to the time he spoke of: a sort of tunnel of masonry work. It was too late to pay a visit to it, as we were in a hurry to get on; and thus I passed, foolishly, the opportunity of seeing something of great interest, which I trust some one else may visit and describe to us fully. On the morning of the third of January, 1855, we reached the ruins of the capital; having made, since the preceding evening, about twenty-two leagues from Sonsonate. We breakfasted in the courtyard of a newly-erected house, amidst ramparts of ruins of the original building, like the wall of a fortress around us. A great number of the former inhabitants had again taken up their abode in this town of "fragments and *décombres*." Some houses seemed not to have suffered much, at least so they appeared, after having been repaired; and commerce threaded its way, anew, over hills and valleys of dusty heaps of building materials, all huddled in heaps of ruin. In the afternoon we started again, and rode on until midnight, when we entered Cojutepec, the temporary capital.

The heat of the sun prompted my friends to adhere to this plan of travelling, and certainly to any one careful about his complexion and his *cerebrum*, it would be advisable to rest during the

hours of the greatest heat of the sun; but those who wish to see the country they pass through, must put up with the inconveniences of travelling by day. We stayed part of the 4th of January in Cojutepec; a little lively town, full of people and the materials for their sustenance. A pretty good band, belonging to the "Defenders of their Country" and their government, executed, in the morning, during the parade, very nice pieces of music, under the leadership of a lively Dutchman; a real live Hollander, with the enthusiasm of a Frenchman, and the kind heart of a German. I had been informed about his existence in those parts, by some acquaintances of mine, who knew him intimately; and I regretted having so little time to make use of all his proffers for our amusement, which he tendered with the frankest and most agreeable of manners. On the 5th of January, we reached the town of San Vicente, eight leagues from Cojutepec. Here, various merchants of consideration reside, buying up produce, such as indigo, hides, and tobacco; and a considerable amount of business is transacted there, during the year. On the 6th, we came to Lempa, a little village on the banks of the river of the same name. This is the river of most note in Salvador, and is a broad,

deep, and pretty rapid stream. I believe it would be found navigable two-thirds of its length, if required: at present all produce is "locomoted" by land carriage, principally by beasts of burden, of which there is a great abundance, as of all other cattle. Here, the road leaves the last elevations of the interior, and extends in an even plain, westward and southward, to the Pacific, and to the Bay of Fonseca.

The saddle-shaped mountain of San Vicente looms yet in the distance, with its sharp peaks at each extremity; two or three other isolated mountains, outposts of the interior mountain-chains, diversify the scenery of woodland and plain, and altogether the landscape is exceedingly interesting.

The difference between Salvador, and Guatemala and Mexico, in regard to scenery, is, that the former has more detached peaks, and the country does not rise to that general elevation of table-land and wide-spreading mountain ridges, as in Mexico, and there are not visible such fearful rents in the general surface as in Guatemala. The roads present thus less difficulties to overcome, and the whole aspect of the country is lovely and fertile; to which extensive tobacco fields, with the broad green leaves of the plant, contribute an aspect of cultivation, agreeable, as a contrast to the wilder scenery.

On the 7th, twelve leagues from Lempa, we came to Chinameca, a little village full of the aboriginal Indians, and well supplied with the necessaries of life. On the 8th, we reached San Miguel, a town of consideration, and famous for its annual fair, to which merchants of all parts of Central America resort, making their purchases of imported goods and disposing of native produce. San Miguel is crammed full of merchants, many of them are wealthy, and carry on a large importing business of European and American manufactures. We had twenty leagues from there to the harbour of La Union, in the Bay of Fonseca. We made half of that distance on the 9th, and stopped for the night in an inn, in the middle of a thick forest, looking for all the world like those inns described in story-books, where travellers are robbed, killed, and cooked, by their host and hostess.

Here, these personages, perfectly unconscious of this important reflection, gave us the best of suppers, and a bed fortified with mosquito-bars, against the howling insect-wolves, that, in millions, haunted this virgin forest.

The various broad roads, here labyrinthic in their connexions, miry and rutty from travel of pack-mules, and creaking carts dragged over them, with

piles of merchandise, from January till December, are perfectly impassable during the rainy season. Oxen and ox-drivers are the only animals that will then be able to fathom, dive and rise in, the trembling mass of mud that is called the highway, even then. Now the season was favourable, and we rattled pretty well over its rutty surface, and arrived on the 10th in La Union.

The waters of the old Pacific, that roll from China to Western America, and from there backward and forward, restless, and ever heaving in a long, mighty swell, which is whipped into passing fury only by an occasional gale of resistless power, — those waters seem to have scooped for themselves a resting-place here, in the wide bay of Fonseca. Amid the rarest beauties of the tropical zone, amid mighty and isolated cones, volcanoes in active service, and others retired from their arduous labours, all clothed in the richest vegetation of palms, ferns, blooming lianas, and giant leaves of the endless variety of tropical plants; — here, embosomed in this margin of beauty, lies the old Pacific, basking in the radiant sunshine, stretching himself in luxurious comfort, from his labour of centuries, between the far and wide hemispheres, where he is condemned to roam, rising and falling for ever.

Around a few islands, worthy of the name of enchanted isles, the waters play and murmur with gentle motion ; the atmosphere is of the purest, the most liquid, and transparent azure; a dreaminess of beauty seems to pervade the air ; and the whole landscape, with its soft outlines melted by distance, as well as the rich colouring blended into a brilliant, yet mellow, harmony of effect, forms a scene which, if matched, cannot, I believe, be surpassed by any other in this world of ours.

The shores of the whole bay seem low, and their outline is contrasted, at proper intervals, by the peaks of the volcanoes ; the perspective of the bay, towards the sea, loses itself amongst the light blue of some islands: thus, from La Union, the bay seems land-locked. Towards the interior, behind the little town, a bold, saddle-shaped mountain, dark and strongly marked with a rugged outline, forms a centre, towards which all the waving outlines of forest-clad, rolling ground, ascend and converge. Two or three airy peaks flank, at a distance, the gradual elevations towards this mountain in the nearer foreground, and, for a long time, it absorbs all contemplation, by its gigantic and wild aspect and proportions. From the lowest of its terraces, the streets of the town descend to the waters of the

bay, which, of a transparent and light green, ripple amongst scattered fragments and black masses of rock. Numerous boats, for the discharge of vessels, lie at anchor, or are hauled up on the shore, or lean against a crazy wharf of wood-work; the long-roofed Custom-house fronts the wharf, and appears ready to swallow every new boat-load of merchandise that approaches its limits; the lynx-eyed officers of the Custom-house stand about in groups, with some harassed merchants, who run about distracted and perspiring, in the hot sun of the tropics, that laughs at the frantic activity of money-making white men, and smiles complacently over a dozen of its own children,—brown and lazy, soldiers, who are lounging about the corridor of the Custom-house, swinging in hammocks, whistling or smoking, singing or sleeping. Behind the Custom-house, ascend the houses of the rest of the town, red-tiled and whitewashed, in regular and spacious streets.

On a busy day, endless trains of wooden-wheeled ox carts creak and shriek along the echoing streets, the patient oxen, the impatient driver, labouring, in slow procession, up and down the steeper ones. Two or three vessels may be seen in the bay, at anchor, far from the shore, as the water is shallow near it, and the ebb recedes a great distance.

The shores of this extensive bay appertain to three states: the north-western to Salvador, the northern to Honduras, and the eastern to Nicaragua; all those three states converge here in their boundaries. It is towards this bay that the proposed rail-route of Mr. Squier takes its direction from the Atlantic shores of Honduras. How the steam "locomotives" will get over the little hills of the interior of Honduras, is a problem that American enterprise alone can solve. But there are no mountains in this hemisphere, over which the stars and stripes may not culminate, especially if carried before the footsteps of the heroic Squier, as was his wont to have them carried on his first journey, as Yankee envoy, through Nicaragua and other states, when a standard-bearer rode ahead, displaying to the wondering natives the star-spangled banner, unfurled, and leading the van of the cavalcade.

The *Isla del Tigre*, or Tiger Island, lies near the mouth of this bay. It is a tall cone rising abruptly from the level of the water: it seems rocky and not overgifted with arable ground, though the vegetation, in some parts, is rich; and the view, from its top, over the bay and to seaward, is well worth the trouble of ascent. It belongs, as yet, to

Honduras, and the bargain with the United States, about its purchase, seems broken off. A half-breed, between a Hondureño and a Frenchman, is commanding officer there, with twenty-five soldiers for a garrison. A company of ever-stirring Yankees have erected there a steam saw-mill, and were doing well at one time; but the lazy atmosphere of the tropics, and the dependence on a still lazier population for necessary labours, begins to tell upon their energies. A protracted strain upon one's mind in urging others to work — urging them every day of the year, again and again, with no progress in their exertions, is both fretting and exhausting. Such efforts are needed, constantly, to prevent one's-self being dragged over to the lazy habits of thousands, who, on one side, form a dead-weight, against which but a single arm has to pull, on the other. Isolated energy may overcome, for a short time, the inertness of great numbers, but it is beyond human strength for one to bear the protracted strain of their weight upon his muscle, for any length of time. This I know from personal observation, of many cases, during a ten years' life amongst lazy populations.

The anchorage round Tiger Island is excellent, in general; but I scarcely think that there is much

shelter there from a south-wester; though I don't doubt the existence of more sheltered anchorage, somewhere near this island. A few native and foreign merchants have warehouses on the island, and there is, comparatively, a good deal of business transacted.

An English ship was in La Union, during my stay there, having its damaged cargo of English goods overhauled by Lloyds' agent, and part of it sold by public auction. The captain of the vessel created quite a sensation amongst the natives, by having an altercation with the authorities, and threatening them with bombarding the town, with two or three twelve-pounders he carried as ballast. But he was merciful, and relented; restraining himself so far as merely to repeat to them, every evening, that he could do it; that, in the Chinese war, he had lived upon nothing but natives; which, according to his age, must have been while he was thirteen to fourteen years old, when other boys live on bread and milk. The best of it was, that when he went, afterwards, to the harbour of Sonsonate, he repeated his threat to the authorities there, got under weigh, and fired three harmless shots at the old shanties that stand round the harbour. I believe Mr. F——, the consul, reported his be-

haviour in the right place, after trying vainly to constrain these stupid proceedings of a drunken sailor.

The time when I should separate from my horse approached. The vessel that was to convey me to Costa Rica was getting ready; and as I had to go from there to the Mosquito shore, on the Atlantic, —a country unapproachable by mounted travellers from the interior,—and as conveyance by sea for horses was not to be had, I was compelled, at last, to part from my faithful companion. He had carried me over two thousand four hundred and nine miles of mountains, valleys, and plains; he had never hung back through fatigue; he had ever been ready to go against any obstacles, animate or inanimate, and now I should leave him to see him, in all likelihood, no more. I am not of a mawkish disposition, but I felt deeply the parting from a friend, ever ready to offer the sacrifice of his life for the accomplishment of my will. Could I help feeling for him ?

Mr. F——, formerly an officer in the British service, had become enamoured of my horse, he offered to buy it. I knew it would be in the best hands I could possibly leave it in; I took the money he offered, and felt miserable at taking gold in ex-

change for the faithfulness even of an animal. The state of my purse, at the time, did not allow me to show my gratitude to the Briton as an honoured friend, nor to the horse as a deserving servant, and thus make of my faithful charger a gift beyond the estimation at so much per limb; and so a bargain was struck. Let those who have lived their lifetime in circumstances where the civilised means of executing one's determination are always ready at hand — let those folks laugh at the unnecessary expenditure of sentiment in the parting from a horse; but any man who ever had his life, or the accomplishment of his will, dependent on the noble exertions of one, will sympathise with me when I parted from my *schimmel*. There was no "continental scene" in the good-bye. I rose at night, before the morning of the departure of Mr. F——, entered his stable, and said my adieu to him: his gentle caresses seemed almost to imply a consciousness of his fate, and nearly overwhelmed my reasoning faculty. They set out before daylight, and I saw them no more.

# ITINERARY

OF

## G. F. VON TEMPSKY'S MITLA.

| Dates of Arrivals. | Stations. | Designation. | Distances in Leagues. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1853. | | | |
| July 22 | Mazatlan | Town and port. | |
| August 2 | Urias | Village | 6 |
| ... 6 | Mazatlan Viejo (El Presidio de) | Small town | 6 |
| ... 7 | San Sebastian | Ditto | 8 |
| ... 12 | Chupaderos | Hamlet | 12 |
| ... 13 | Panuco | Mining village | 8 |
| ... 14 | Santa Lucia | Village | 6 |
| ... 21 | Jocote | Hamlet | 10 |
| ... 22 | La Ramada | Ditto | 10 |
| ... 23 | Chavarias | Small village | 12 |
| ... 24 | El Salto | Cattle estate | 12 |
| ... 25 | El Coyote | Ditto | 10 |
| ... 26 | Los Mimbres | Part of the road without any habitation | 13 |
| ... 27 | Durango | City | 12 |
| Dec. 19 | Punta | *Hacienda*, or estate | 10 |
| ... 20 | San Felipe | Cattle estate | 10 |
| ... 21 | Valle | Ditto | 10 |
| ... 22 | Sombrerete | Mining town | 12 |
| ... 23 | Zaenz | Town | 15 |
| ... 24 | Rancho grande | *Hacienda* and village | 11 |
| ... 25 | Fresnillo | Mining town | 10 |
| ... 26 | Zacatecas | City | 12 |
| ... 29 | San Jacinto | Village | 16 |
| ... 30 | San Francisco | Ditto | 3 |

| Dates of Arrivals. | Stations. | Designation. | Distances in Leagues. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1854. | | | |
| Jan. 14 | Rancho | Farm | 10 |
| ... 15 | Aguas Calientes | Town | |
| ... 16 | Encarnacion | Ditto | 12 |
| ... 17 | Lagos | Ditto | 18 |
| ... 18 | Leon | City | 12 |
| ... 20 | Silao | Town | 9 |
| ... 21 | Celaya | Ditto | 24 |
| ... 22 | Queretaro | Ditto | 12 |
| ... 24 | San Juan del Rio | Ditto | 14 |
| ... ... | Arroyo Zarco | *Hacienda* | 13 |
| ... 25 | Tepeje | Town | 14 |
| ... 26 | Rancho | *Hacienda* | 16 |
| ... 27 | Mexico | Capital | |
| Feb. 11 | Cordova | Village | 10 |
| ... 12 | San Luis | Town | 10 |
| ... 13 | Puebla | City | 8 |
| ... 14 | Tejuacan | Town | 8 |
| ... 15 | Venta Salada | Hamlet | 9 |
| ... 17 | San Antonio | Indian village | 14 |
| ... ... | Cuiz | Ditto | |
| ... ... | Tecomevacca | Ditto | |
| ... ... | Claquotepec | Ditto | |
| ... 18 | Cuicatlan | Town | 12 |
| ... 19 | Dominguio | Village | 13 |
| ... ... | Las Bocas | Hamlet | |
| ... 20 | San Juan del Estado | Village | 14 |
| ... 21 | Aragon | Ditto | 12 |
| ... ... | Oaxaca | Town | |
| ... 23 | Tule | Village | 7 |
| ... ... | Tlacolula | Small town | |
| ... 24 | Mitla | Indian village | 8 |
| ... ... | San Dionisio | Ditto | |
| ... 25 | Totolapa | Village | 8 |
| ... 26 | Rancho Quemado | "The Burnt Farm" | 10 |
| ... 27 | San Carlos | Village | 10 |
| ... ... | San Bartolo | Indian village | |
| ... 28 | Las Vaccas | Hamlet | 10 |
| ... 29 | Jucitlan | Village | 10 |

| Dates of Arrivals. | Stations. | Designation. | Distances in Leagues. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1854. | | | |
| March 1 | Jalapa | Village | 10 |
| ... 2 | Tehuantepec | Town | 8 |
| ... 29 | Juchitan | Indian town | 10 |
| April 1 | Rancho | Farm | |
| ... 2 | Costa | Along the coast | |
| ... 3 | Ditto | Ditto | 40 |
| ... 4 | Ditto | Ditto | |
| ... 5 | Ditto | Ditto | |
| ... 6 | Punta | Village | 10 |
| ... 7 | Tonala | Town | 7 |
| ... 9 | Las Marias | Cattle farm | 6 |
| ... 10 | Mosquito | Farm | 8 |
| ... 11 | Pijijiapa | Village | 8 |
| ... 12 | Riobobo | Farm-house | 8 |
| ... 13 | Napastepec | Village | 7 |
| ... 14 | Esquintla | Ditto | 7 |
| ... 15 | Pueblo Nuevo | Ditto | 4 |
| ... 16 | Uista | Ditto | 5 |
| ... 17 | Uevetan | Ditto | 8 |
| ... 18 | Tapachula | Ditto | 8 |
| ... 19 | Tuxtla | Ditto | |
| ... 20 | Malicatan | Ditto | |
| ... 21 | Ayuta | Ditto | |
| ... 22 | Naranjo (*boundary* between Mexico and Guatemala) | River and hamlet | 40 |
| ... 23 | Retalulehu (fertile earth) | First village of Guatemala | 10 |
| May 4 | San Luis | Farm | 6 |
| ... 5 | Quezaltenango | Town | 8 |
| ... 6 | Totonicapan | Indian town | 6 |
| ... 7 | Argueta | *Hacienda* | 8 |
| ... 8 | Solola | Village | 3 |
| ... ... | San Andreas | Town | 6 |
| ... 9 | Patzum | Ditto | 4 |
| ... ... | Pacicia | Ditto | 5 |
| ... ... | Chimaltenango | Ditto | 3 |
| ... ... | Villa de Zaragoza | Ditto | |
| ... 10 | Zumpango | Ditto | 10 |

| Dates of Arrivals. | Stations. | Designation. | Distances in Leagues. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1854. | | | |
| May 10 | San Iago . . . | Town . . . | 2 |
| .... ... | Mixco . . . | Ditto . . . | 2 |
| ... ... | Guatemala . . . | City . . . | 1 |
| Dec. 24 | Corral de Piedras . | Village . . . | 10 |
| ... 25 | . . . . . | A village to the south of the town of Santa Anna . | |
| ... 26 | . . . . . | Farm on a river that forms the boundary between the States of Salvador and Guatemala . | 40 |
| ... 27 | . . . . . | Village . . . | |
| ... 28 | Sonsonate . . . | Town . . . | |
| 1855. | | | |
| Jan. 3 | San Salvador . . | Old capital . . | 22 |
| ... 4 | Cojutepec . . . | Temporary capital | 12 |
| ... 5 | San Vicente . . | Town . . . | 8 |
| ... 6 | Lempa . . . | River, with hamlet | 10 |
| ... 7 | Chinameca . . . | Indian village . | 12 |
| ... 8 | San Miguel . . . | Town . . . | 10 |
| ... 9 | Rancho . . . | Rancho . . . | 10 |
| .. 10 | La Union . . . | Town and port . | 10 |

N.B. — The distances specified above are, in general, but approximate; that is, according to the best information that could be given, and the best calculation that could be made, *en route*.

THE END.

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